



ERIC CHURCH races to the top with "Talladega"

**THIS
WEEK'S
NASH**

"GIRL CRUSH"
AND 9 OTHER SONGS
THAT STIRRED THE POT!

COUNTRY WEEKLY

THE INSIDE STORIES ON COUNTRY MUSIC'S HOTTEST STARS
APRIL 27, 2015

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**Country's
HOTTEST
Bachelor?**

**KACEY
MUSGRAVES**
joins forces
with Brian
Wilson

**ALL
ABOUT
THE
KIDS**

LADY ANTEBELLUM
TEAMS UP WITH
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NETWORK TO HELP
KIDS IN NEED

PLUS! RAY STEVENS RETURNS TO COMEDY

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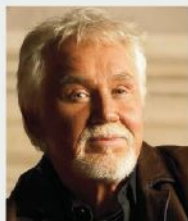
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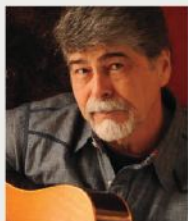
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special appearance 1/19/16



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Kathy Mattea



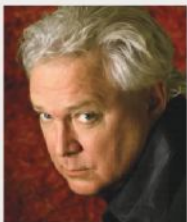
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**The Bellamy
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Jamie O'Neal



**Riders
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Wade Hayes

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THE HIT LIST



(From left) Lindsay Ell, Craig Campbell, Jerrod Niemann and Preston Brust (LOCASH) get ready for cornhole.

Cornhole Compadres

◀ **CRAIG CAMPBELL**'s third annual Celebrity Cornhole Challenge was another huge success, raising funding to fight colorectal cancer. The event, held at Centennial Park in Nashville, provided the perfect setting for games and music. And some of Craig's singing pals joined in for a good time, including **JERROD NIEMANN**, **LOCASH**, **CHARLIE WORSHAM** and **HALFWAY TO HAZARD**.

Birthday Bash

▶ With a three-plus-hours-long set of hits, **KENNY CHESNEY** pulled out all the stops for his Big Re-visual Tour launch in Nashville, even bringing out guests like **TAYLOR SWIFT**, **JOE WALSH** and **UNCLE KRACKER** to perform with him. As an extra bonus, it all went down on Kenny's 47th birthday.



Happy Troubadour

◀ Texas country music mainstay **ROBERT EARL KEEN** is the quintessential Texas troubadour, so it was befitting that he was presented with the inaugural Troubadour Award for songwriting excellence during his *Happy Prisoner* album release party at Nashville's Broadcast Music, Inc., in March. The event was made even more festive as Robert Earl and his band played a number of selections from his new bluegrass album while industry folks sipped on his REK Honey Pilsner beer and snacked on barbecue sliders.



#BandCrush

▲ When controversy arose because some fans misunderstood the meaning of **LITTLE BIG TOWN**'s current single, "Girl Crush," and phoned their local radio stations to complain, the band's peers, including Blake Shelton, Miranda Lambert, Reba McEntire, **KACEY MUSGRAVES** and others, hit the socials to share photos of themselves wearing "Girl Crush" hats in a show of solidarity. Turns out radio still loves the tune and it's climbing the charts.

Keep Austin Awesome

▶ Nashville may be known as Music City, but **AUSTIN, TEXAS** sure earns a tip of the cowboy hat from us. After a four-day trip to the Texas capital, we had nothing but great things to say about our time listening to live tunes from Sixth Street to Rainey Street, and everything in between, including mouthwatering Texas-style beef brisket and ice-cold local brews.



THE JUKEBOX

Essential songs from the artists featured in this issue!

Lady Antebellum

"Bartender"

"Freestyle"

Dierks Bentley

"Say You Do"

"Drunk on a Plane"

Little Big Town

"Girl Crush"

Kacey Musgraves

"Follow Your Arrow"

Merle Haggard

"Okie From Muskogee"

Johnny Cash

"Sunday Morning Coming Down"

Dixie Chicks

"Goodbye Earl"

Garth Brooks

"The Thunder Rolls"

Loretta Lynn

"The Pill"

Wade Bowen & Randy Rogers

"Lady Bug"

Ray Stevens

"The Streak"

Chris Young

"Lonely Eyes"

Banditos

"Long Gone, Anyway"

rdio Look for this
Country Weekly
playlist on **rdio**!



COVER STORY

44

Lady Antebellum

Lady A's Hillary Scott, Charles Kelley and Dave Haywood have made charitable causes a major priority in their career. The threesome talks about their latest venture with the Children's Miracle Network and their hopes for effecting change.

26 | I Am a Woman

Lorrie Morgan, Vince Gill, Darryl Worley and other stars play a benefit concert for a beloved member of the music industry.

50 | Hot Bachelors

We asked for your votes—and you came through. Check out the results of our Hottest Bachelor poll, and read all about your favorites.

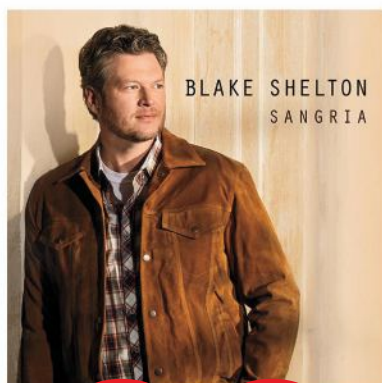
62 | Ray Stevens

The versatile entertainer keeps the laughs coming with his first all-comedy album in several years, *Here We Go Again!*



27 NASH

Little Big Town's "Girl Crush" is stirring up a little controversy, but that's not unusual in country music. We take a look back at 10 songs that got tongues wagging and made radio a bit uneasy. Plus, looking for that special present to give for Mother's Day? We've got your handy gift guide right here.



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Eric Church goes downtown to celebrate his "Talladega" No. 1; Tanya Tucker returns with new music and a national tour.

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"Say You Do."

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Meet the lovely Cam.

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Ready for wedding season.

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Head to pho.

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Don Williams.

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A look at new singles from Blake Shelton, Montgomery Gentry and Ray Scott.

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Ira Dean.

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[LETTERS]



Dear Readers:

There are many artists in country music who enjoy giving back to those in need, and **LADY ANTEBELLUM** is no exception. The trio has formed an organization called LadyAID to help change lives around the world. And they are certainly on their way. One organization that benefits from LadyAID is the Children's Miracle Network. This non-profit organization raises funds for children's hospitals, medical research and community awareness of children's health issues.

Lady A and CMN have joined forces for the greater good to help children everywhere. We sat down with the group to talk about their involvement and why they chose this charity to be a part of LadyAID. We also chat with John Lauck, CEO of CMN, to learn more about his organization's good deeds. So check out our cover story and find out how we can all help.

On a much lighter subject, you voted and we tallied. The winner of our Hottest Bachelor poll is revealed. Once again, you went to *CountryWeekly.com* in droves and voted for Mr. Hotty himself, **CHRIS YOUNG**. Chris won by a landslide and continues to dominate this poll. But there is so much more: we have nine other sexy men who made the top 10. So go to page 50 and feel free to enjoy the winners of *Country Weekly's* Hottest Bachelor poll. Thanks for voting.

In this week's *NASH*, we highlight 10 of country's most controversial songs. With **LITTLE BIG TOWN's** "Girl Crush" getting a lot of buzz lately, we take a look back at other songs that pushed the envelope and still became hits. We also sit down with **WADE BOWEN** and **RANDY ROGERS** for a few beers, select some gifts to give your moms this Mother's Day and so much more!

Don't miss next week's issue, on stands April 27, as we get personal with **ZAC BROWN**.



See you next week!

Lisa Konicki
LISA KONICKI, Editor in Chief

Tell Us What YOU Think!

MAIL: Letters, *Country Weekly*,
506 2nd Ave. South, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37210.

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Please include your name, address and daytime phone number with all correspondence. *Country Weekly* assumes no responsibility for returning unsolicited material, including, but not limited to, photographs, artwork, manuscripts and letters. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

A TRUE LOVE STORY

I love to read good things about country music lovers and singers. Most of my 73 years of life I have had a real love for country music. I met my husband on the dance floor enjoying the music we loved. Today in this era we have some wonderful people coming up following in the footsteps of the true country people.

When my husband was alive, we always had a country radio station on, even in the barn while milking. My husband (Sheldon) would say it kept the cows calm, so they would milk better.

I would love to see Blake Shelton and his wife, Miranda Lambert, do more writing and singing together. Their voices blend so very well. Also, Tim and Faith do very well together. I have a phrase that I would love to hear written in a song—"If love could have saved you, you would have lived forever"—in memory of my deceased husband. I miss him so very much. Dancing, traveling, playing games and listening to music—we did just about everything in our lives together.

— JOAN HOLLIS
Belleville, Wis.

HOMETOWN PRIDE

We at Mid-Peninsula High School in Menlo Park, Calif., have read with great excitement and pride your recent interview with Ryan Michaels, Mid-Pen class of 1995, and his partner and fiancée, Shannon Haley, of Haley & Michaels [*Who's New*, Jan. 12]. We wish them both every success and happiness going forward in music and in life.

— DOUGLAS C. THOMPSON
Menlo Park, Calif.

A black and white photograph of three women on a staircase. One woman is standing at the top, leaning on the railing, while two others are seated on the steps below. The background features a wall with a repeating peacock feather pattern.

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[THE BIG PICTURE]

ALL REVVED UP

We're not sure if Blake Shelton is checking out NASCAR driver Joey Logano's #22 car or checking out his hair in the reflection. Either way, he seems very pleased to be in the garage during practice for the CampingWorld.com 500 in Phoenix.





PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

the mix

ALL YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE STARS OF COUNTRY—AND THEN SOME!

For the latest music news,
go to **COUNTRYWEEKLY.COM**



Raising Arizona

If you're heading out to the beautiful Arizona desert, you'll want to check out a new country music festival featuring some big-name stars. The inaugural Sidewinder Country Music Festival on April 25 and 26 will be headlined by **SARA EVANS** and **DAVID NAIL**, with additional performances by **GLORIANA**, **A THOUSAND HORSES**, **THE TIME JUMPERS** with **VINCE GILL**, **MARTY STUART & HIS FABULOUS SUPERLATIVES**, **THE CADILLAC THREE** and many others. Two-day passes start at \$99. For more information on Sidewinder, go to sidewindermusicfest.com.

JAM SESSION

Brad Paisley (left) and Asleep at the Wheel's Ray Benson jam at the Jimmy Kimmel Live! party in Austin, Texas.

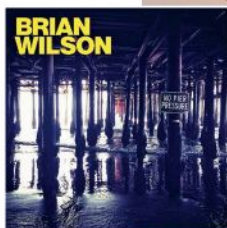


PUT 'EM UP

(From left) Ronnie Dunn, Reba McEntire and Blake Shelton are knockouts at Muhammad Ali's Celebrity Fight Night XXI held in Phoenix.

HELP ME, KACEY

Country has long had its flirtation with the beach, but never made the kind of waves generated when **KACEY MUSGRAVES** collaborated with **BEACH BOYS** mastermind **BRIAN WILSON** on a song for his newly released album, *No Pier Pressure*. The track, titled "Guess You Had to Be There," is as bouncy and sunny as you'd expect from Brian and sounds more like something from the beloved band's orchestral *Pet Sounds* era than anything in country. Kacey blends her voice beautifully, stepping out front for the verses. *No Pier Pressure* also includes collaborations with She & Him, fun.'s Nate Ruess and former Beach Boy Al Jardine.



COUNTRY CRUISING

CRAIG MORGAN, LINDSAY ELL, MAGGIE ROSE and a host of other stars, proving that the cruise's tagline of "Best Country Music Cruise Ever" is no mere hype. Travelers will enjoy a luxurious Norwegian Cruise Line experience along with shopping, speed boat riding, snorkeling and other activities. Ports of call are Miami, Nassau, Great Stirrup Cay, Key West and Grand Cayman. To book your passage on Country Cruising and for more information, go to countrycruising.com.

Country music cruises have become the hottest phenomenon in travel. And the one that packs in more stars than any other is **COUNTRY CRUISING**, set to sail Oct. 23-30 to the sunny and tropical Caribbean Sea. Host **NEAL MCCOY** will be joined by **TRACE ADKINS, THOMPSON SQUARE, JOE NICHOLS, PARMALEE,**

Musical Notes

ENGAGED

MAGGIE ROSE

and boyfriend Austin Marshall were engaged during her hometown performance at Bethesda [Md.] Blues and Jazz on March 21. Austin is the executive vice president of Play It Again Music Publishing.



ALBUMS

JOANNE CASH, the sister of Johnny Cash, has released a duets album, *Breaking Down the Barriers*. The album features duets with Joanne's brother **TOMMY CASH**, Johnny's daughter **ROSANNE CASH**, **LARRY GATLIN** and other artists.

JASON MICHAEL CARROLL

is set to release his new album, *What Color Is Your Sky*, on May 5. This will mark Jason Michael's first full-length album since 2011.



SPRING BREAK COWBOY STYLE

Not every spring break takes place at the beach.

Pro bull riders will be heading to Las Vegas for their annual **PBR COWBOY SPRING BREAK FESTIVAL**

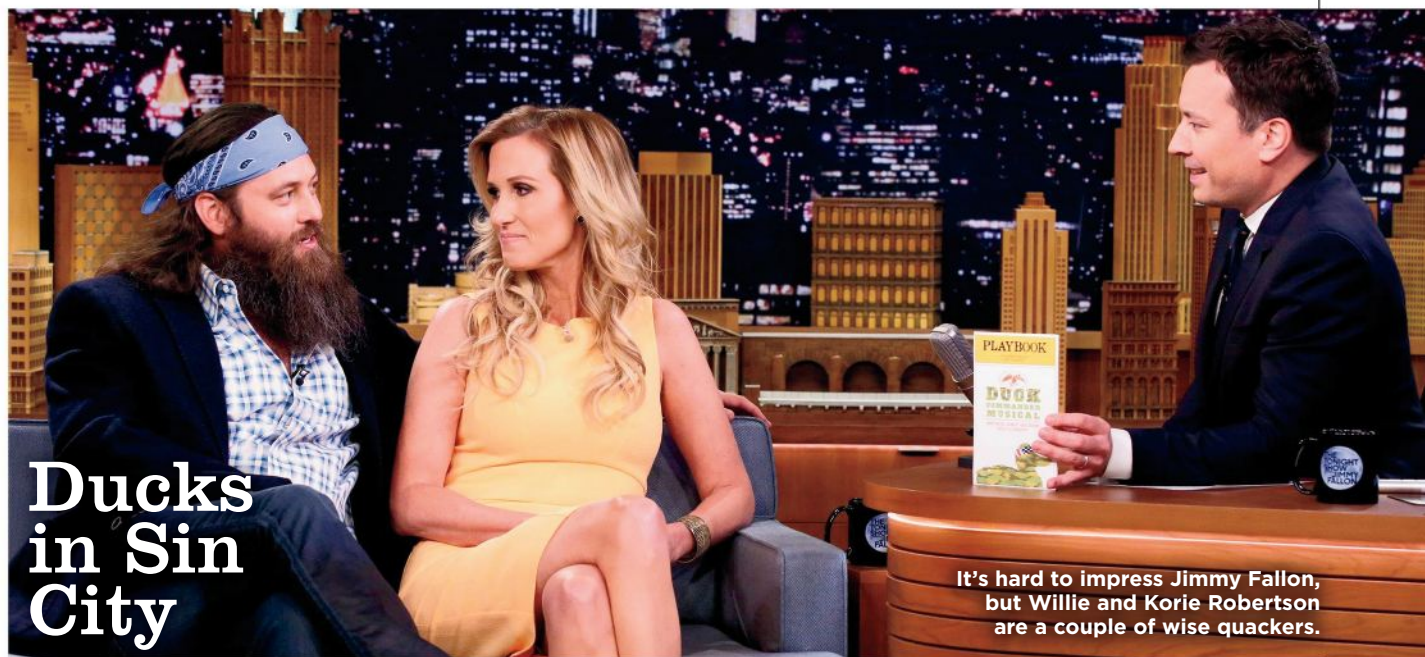
and they'll be enjoying great country music, just like the breakers in

Panama City Beach. **THE BAND PERRY** and **GARY ALLAN** are among the performers at the three-day event that also includes pool parties, cocktails, shopping and all of the other traditional spring break activity . . . plus mechanical bulls. In addition, the "Last Cowboy Standing" competition takes place, which pits the Top 50 bull riders in the world against each other for a total of \$250,000 in prizes. PBR Cowboy Spring Break takes place May 22–24 at the MGM Resorts Village in Las Vegas.



TONS OF FUN

TENNESSEE ERNIE FORD's 1955 hit "**SIXTEEN TONS**" was one of the 25 sound recordings added to the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry. Each year the Library chooses recordings that are "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant." This year's inductees feature recordings that span from 1890 to 1999, including Ben E. King's "Stand by Me," The Righteous Brothers' "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling" and Steve Martin's album *A Wild and Crazy Guy*.

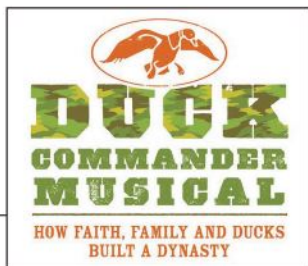


Ducks in Sin City

It sounds like the stuff of an April Fool's prank—if that hadn't already happened about a month back. Yes, The Robertson family of **DUCK DYNASTY** fame will now be

among the lights of Las Vegas in the **DUCK COMMANDER MUSICAL**. The story follows *The Duck Commander Family*, the book co-authored by Willie and Korie Robertson that depicts

their family's rags-to-riches story and colorful characters. Directed by Jeff Calhoun (*Newsies*), the show (a "tale of faith, food and family" according to the website) premiered April 15 in the Crown Theater at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.



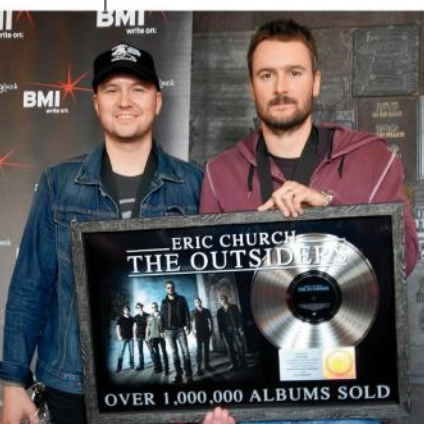
It's hard to impress Jimmy Fallon, but Willie and Korie Robertson are a couple of wise quackers.

PARTIES

TALLADEGA NIGHT

**ERIC CHURCH "TALLADEGA" NO. 1 PARTY
ACME FEED & SEED**

MUCH LIKE THE LYRICS in his No. 1 hit "Talladega," Eric Church became sentimental while talking about the song, which he co-wrote with Luke Laird, at a party held in downtown Nashville. "I've been doing this a while and I've learned that it's not what you do, it's who you do it with," Eric said of the team that surrounds him. "I'm a basketball guy. I'm a sports guy. I remember when we would all get around the huddle and put our hands in. I don't remember if we won the game but I remember the faces around that huddle. Those are the people who go to war with you."



Luke Laird (left) with Eric

After Eric and Luke were presented with plaques in the shape of the Talladega racetrack to commemorate the occasion, the crowd learned there was much more to celebrate. Not only had Eric's current album, *The Outsiders*, been certified platinum, his very first record, *Sinners Like Me*, had officially been certified gold nearly 10 years after its release. The announcement was met with thunderous applause. "I'm the luckiest guy alive to have the kind of career where I'm as proud of songs like 'Outsiders' and 'Cold One' as I am of 'Hometown' and 'Talladega.' That's what we've tried to make our career about. That's why I'm holding this album right here," Eric said, holding the plaque for *Sinners Like Me*.

"I've been waiting 10 years for this one," he shared. "In Chicago, we played nine songs off this album [*Sinners Like Me*] and people sang every word. To me, that is what music is about. It's about finding that connection and not being afraid to put it out there."

Musical Notes CONT.



MORE ALBUMS

You'd be hard-pressed to find a country music listener who wasn't a fan of the torchy **K.T. OSLIN** and her massive hits like "Do Ya," "I Always Come Back," "Hold Me" and more. Now, 15 years after the release of her first album, *80's Ladies*, K.T. is revisiting those tunes on her new album, *Simply*, out June 2. *Simply* is a collection of new arrangements of many of her hits, including "Live Close By, Visit Often" and "80's Ladies."



It's been a few years since **TANYA TUCKER** released new music, so we're thrilled to learn that not only will she have a new album available later this year, she'll also be hitting the road on tour to showcase the new music. "I've taken a few years off and it is time to get back on the road," Tanya said. "I am really excited to perform all the hits that the fans love so much, and sing a few new songs that I have been working on." Tanya's tour kicks off April 24 in Wendover, Nev.



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Jamaica Me Wanna . . .

Ready for the summer vacay of a lifetime? Bring your boots and bikinis to Sandals Resorts in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, for a Memorial Day of country music on the beach. **CHRIS YOUNG**, **JERROD NIEMANN**, **TYLER FARR**, **CASEY JAMES** and newcomers like **LOGAN MIZE**, **CAM** and **JOSH DORR** will be performing at this fun festival, running May 22-26, which also includes a welcome reception, pool parties and acoustic jams. But what makes it even better is that proceeds raised from this event will benefit The Boot Campaign—an initiative that raises awareness of the challenges facing service members during and after their service. Ready to book your trip? Go to bootsonthebeachvacation.com.



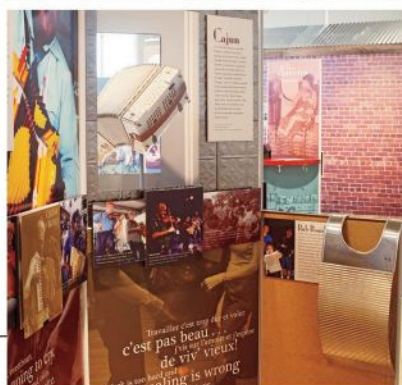
WHAT'S THAT?

CERTIFICATION GOLD/PLATINUM/DIAMOND

When an artist's project reaches certain sales numbers, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) officially certifies the project **gold (500,000 copies sold)**, **platinum (1 million copies sold)** or **diamond (10 million copies sold)**. The growing popularity of digital singles downloads has served a heavy blow to artists' physical album sales, so fewer and fewer are reaching these milestones, so the RIAA now recognizes digital sales separately. Artists whose projects deliver lackluster numbers often joke that their album sold aluminum, plywood or plastic.

PERFECT HARMONY

THE BIRTHPLACE OF COUNTRY MUSIC MUSEUM in Bristol, Tenn., recently opened *New Harmonies*, a Smithsonian exhibit that features a wide range of American music styles, including bluegrass, country, spiritual and zydeco. The exhibit, which runs through September, showcases artifacts, photos, audio-visual aids and interactive components. In addition, visitors can also pick up a guitar, banjo, fiddle or mandolin for a hands-on experience. For more info, check out birthplaceofcountrymusic.org.



Musical Notes CONT.

DRUMLINE

GARRETT GOODWIN,

Carrie Underwood's long-time drummer, is helping spearhead KMLM, an organization that is creating jobs and providing backpacks full of educational materials for children in poverty-stricken regions of Latin America and the Caribbean. With every \$25 donation made at kmlm.org, a backpack is manufactured in the Dominican Republic and filled with educational tools, such as pencils and paper, and donated to a child in need.



BYRD WATCH

TRACY BYRD

is getting a Texas-sized honor by being named the newest inductee of the Texas Country Hall of Fame. The "Holdin' Heaven" and "Watermelon Crawl" singer will join an esteemed list of fellow inductees, including Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings and Buck Owens. The induction ceremony and Texas Country Music Hall of Fame Show will be held at 7 p.m. at the Carthage Civic Center in Carthage, Texas, on Aug. 8.



RIGHT AS RAIN

Before those May flowers can bloom, we've got to finish up these April showers. But there's no use in being blue about it—at least not when you have great songs like these for your rainy-day playlist, curated by *Country Weekly* staffers.



"Bring On the Rain" Jo Dee Messina

"This ballad makes you believe you can overcome anything. With Jo Dee's powerful vocals you

just want the rain to come down heavy and bring on whatever comes with it. It doesn't hurt that Tim McGraw lends his voice to this ballad, either—that will make any lady long for a rainy day."

— LISA KONICKI, EDITOR IN CHIEF



"Rainy Night in Georgia" Conway Twitty and Sam Moore

"No, it isn't traditionally a country song, but when Conway Twitty and R&B legend Sam Moore blended their voices for this Brook Benton classic written by Tony Joe White, it was neither country nor R&B—it was a religious experience. And let me tell you, Chris Young's version is absolutely goose-bump inducing, too!"

— TAMMY RAGUSA, SENIOR WRITER



"Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain" Willie Nelson

"Willie isn't afraid to write sweet, somber songs about love, heartache and the

hope of finding happiness again. His resonating vibrato sends that overwhelming lump to the back of your throat because you know you can relate to every word."

— CARISSA RICCARDI, PHOTO EDITOR



"I'm No Stranger to the Rain" Keith Whitley

"The poor guy in the song has fought with the devil, been sacrificed by

brothers, crucified by lovers—and still, he never gives in. By the song's end he's riding the wind and dancing in a hurricane. Life's downpour simply cannot keep our friend of thunder down. If only Keith Whitley himself had been this strong."

— JEFF MELTESEN, PUBLISHER



"Rainy Day Woman" Waylon Jennings

"I always think of Waylon when it rains and vice versa. Never fails, if there's rain, there's a Waylon."

— KRISTEN BECK, DESIGNER



"Raining on Sunday" Keith Urban

"Rain is often a symbol of rejuvenation, which is just what the couple needs in this Radney Foster tune

covered by Keith Urban. The grind of their lives is a constant, nagging presence, but at least a rainy Sunday would afford them the ability to reconnect physically and armor themselves for the days ahead. In this case, rain isn't something to dread; it's essential for life."

— JON FREEMAN, MANAGING EDITOR



"Songs About Rain" Gary Allan

"Rain is a common theme in country as a metaphor for bad times, breakups and other messy situations. 'Songs About Rain' cleverly takes it a step further, with a little dark humor thrown in. In the tune, the down-on-his-luck narrator puts the blame on the radio station he's listening to for playing nothing but sad and depressing songs, as if the DJ knew his situation and was purposely trying to make him feel even worse. As the lyrics state, *Hey I hope it's sunny wherever you are / But that's sure not the picture tonight in my car*. That about sums it all up, doesn't it?"

— BOB PAXMAN, SENIOR WRITER



"Buckets of Rain" Bob Dylan

"The singer calmly describes all of the things about a lover that makes him happy. He then reveals

that those same things make him sad when that person isn't with him. The music itself is lighthearted and plucks along like sprinkling raindrops in the moonlight. It is simultaneously a confession of vulnerability and an unassuming declaration of love. To say more would be a disservice to the song."

— JASON SIMANEK, WEB PRODUCER



"Crying in the Rain" Crystal Gayle

"I know The Everly Brothers' 1962 original is the go-to version, but I've got a soft spot for Crystal Gayle's 1981 recording of the song. I can't help but imagine Crystal—her formerly brown eyes a soulful shade of

blue—darting into a rainstorm to hide her tears."

— JOHN VASILE, COPY EDITOR



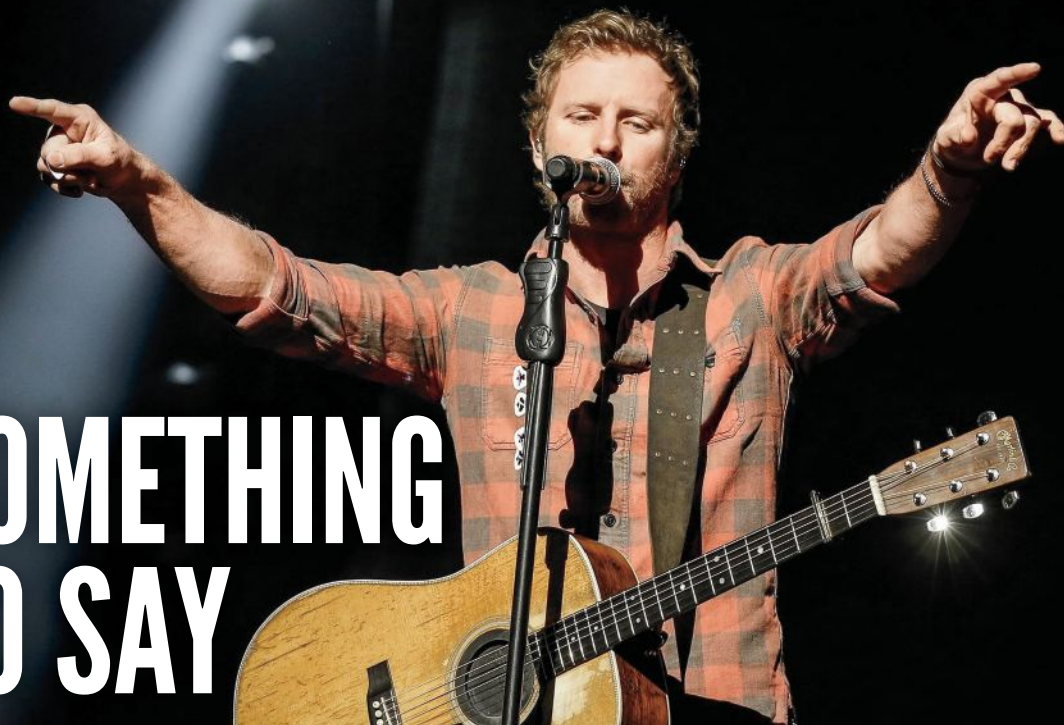
"Here Comes the Rain" Chris Knight

"Many of Chris Knight's songs are as deep and dark as the Kentucky coalmines he once worked, and 'Here Comes the Rain' is no exception. It serves as a painfully pleasing reminder about the pangs of heartbreak:

when you cry in the rain, you cry alone."

— JIM CASEY, DEPUTY EDITOR

SOMETHING TO SAY



A FEW YEARS BACK, Shane McAnally had a writing appointment with his buddies Matthew Ramsey and Trevor Rosen. As he was walking into the office, he was singing something he didn't quite know what to do with: *say you do, say you might*.

"Shane just kept saying those two lines," remembers Matthew. "He was like, 'I don't even know what it means.' We had worked with Shane enough to know to trust his instincts, so Trevor and I were like, 'OK, we'll go down that road with you.'"

The three friends began to dissect Shane's hook to figure out what shape their song would take. The more they discussed the vulnerability of those words Shane came in singing, the more they decided to make the ballad about wanting your ex back for just one night, even though the male subject knows it might not be the best thing for either of them.

"Sometimes you come in with a concrete idea for a song, and sometimes it seems like they just happen," Matthew says. "With this one, I feel like, after we were done, it was like we were all looking at each

other like we didn't know what just happened. We knew we wrote something really special, though."

Matthew and Trevor, who, at the time, were also focusing on their band Old Dominion, started to work "Say You Do" into their live shows. So the feeling was bittersweet when the song found its way to Dierks Bentley, who wanted to record the tune for his *Riser* album.

"It was a hard one for us to get rid of or let someone else cut," notes Trevor. "We had played it so much and really felt like it was special. It was like a double-edged sword as a songwriter. You go, 'Man, I've tried to get cuts for so long and Dierks Bentley is awesome, but do we want to keep this for Old Dominion?' We weren't quite ready to do that yet, so the fact that he cut it was a blessing for us."

Dierks went on to release "Say You Do" as the fourth single from *Riser*, marking yet another Top 10 hit in his career. "Sometimes it's like a spiritual experience when you write a song, and sometimes it's work," explains Matthew. "This one wasn't work."

— ALANNA CONAWAY

"SAY YOU DO"

↑ Performed by
Dierks Bentley

→ Written by
Trevor Rosen,
Matthew Ramsey,
Shane McAnally



THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

Shane took his friendship with Matthew and Trevor to a whole new level recently, going from being their co-writer to being their producer. Shane is now working closely alongside his friends on their forthcoming debut album as Old Dominion.

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COUNTRY WEEKLY

THE INSIDE STORIES ON COUNTRY MUSIC'S HOTTEST STARS

CAM

HOMETOWN:
Lafayette, Calif.

CURRENT SINGLE:
"My Mistake"

WHY YOU SHOULD KNOW HER:

Cam is a figurative ray of sunshine, wearing her signature yellow at every public appearance. Her covers of Pharrell's "Happy" and the Mark Ronson/Bruno Mars collaboration "Uptown Funk" are viral sensations on YouTube.

FINDING HER VOICE

"Your voice is such a personal thing that when you try to communicate with everybody it just comes out that way when you're talking, but in singing there are so many small choices that you have to make in every phrase that you sing, and not only do you have to be consistent, but you have to make sure that that is unique and also still sounds like you. It's kind of overwhelming when you think about it, and it's not something that most people think about, because they think it should just come out of you. But no, if voices just came out that way, we all would sound like whatever our parents listened to."

I'M OK, YOU'RE OK

"As a woman it's really important to know how to make a living for yourself, and when you have that down, all the rest of it is amazing and a blessing. So I don't feel what I think some artists feel—'Oh my

gosh, this thing is so important to me and what if I lose it and what if someone doesn't like it and what if a label tells me I should be doing it differently?' and all those things that really scare you. I think, for me—and I definitely always get nervous—but I've spent the time and I've figured it out, and this is who I am and people are either into it and get it, and if they're not, that's OK. I can go waitress and I will be fine. I will be OK."

WRITE ON

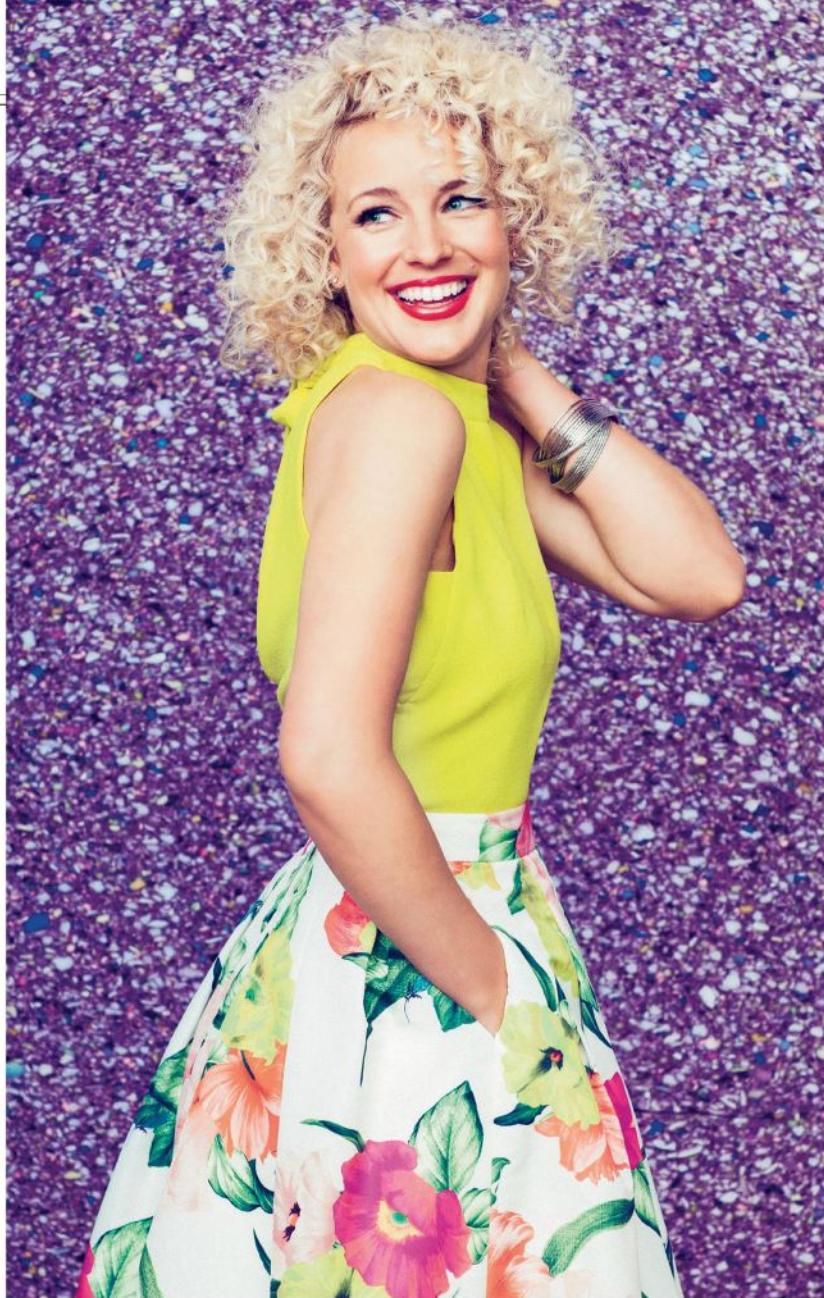
"Nashville is so great and they have these writers that can

write Monday through Friday, sometimes two songs a day. I cannot do that and I commend them for that. If I wrote a song, I will finish it. It might be four years from now, it might be two weeks from now, but I cannot let go. And I will tweak it until it's perfect."

ROOTS

"I've always been a towhead. My hair has been super-blond a really long time, but the more time you spend inside, the more you pay for your hair to be blond."

— TAMMY RAGUSA





SOMETHING BIG IS COMING.

June 8

Wedding Belles

This year is shaping up to be the year of weddings! **JASON ALDEAN** and **BRITTANY KERR** just exchanged vows, but there are plenty more engaged couples who could be tying the knot soon, including **TYLER HUBBARD** and **HAYLEY STOMMEL**, **BRANTLEY GILBERT** and **AMBER COCHRAN**, **ERIC PASLAY** and **NATALIE HARKER**, and **RAY SCOTT** and **STACEY BEARD**. Whether they walk down the aisle in 2015 or later, we couldn't help but speculate a bit on what these breathtaking brides-to-be might be wearing for their big day (and the big party after). And maybe you'll get a good idea for your upcoming nuptials. Thanks to The Knot for the great inspiration.

— TAMMY RAGUSA



◀ Wedding Dress **Eugenia Lisette** (3960)

Great legs, hair swept up in a super-sexy bun, yet still feminine, classy and completely stunning.

\$3,500-\$3,999

Reception Dress ▶ **Jordan Moments** (A275)

Hayley can dance all night in this fun frock.

\$250-\$499

HAYLEY STOMMEL

ENGAGED TO:
FLORIDA
GEORGIA LINE'S
TYLER HUBBARD

Hayley is tall, slender with the lithe body and shapely legs of a dancer and beautiful long, thick locks. She seems to share her future husband's passion for the water, but she's also a small-town girl from Idaho.



AMBER COCHRAN

ENGAGED TO: BRANTLEY GILBERT

Amber is a petite beauty with dark hair and eyes, and a warm olive complexion. This Georgia schoolteacher, who is exchanging vows with country music's outlaw teddy bear, is obviously strong, but also graciously feminine.



▲ Wedding Dress

Sottero and Midgley (Lola)

The long, fitted lines of this gown will elongate Amber's petite frame, but the beadwork and fluttery cap sleeve give it full-scale style.

\$2,000-\$2,499

Reception Dress ►

Pronovias (Messina)

Fun, flirty and feminine, whether she's dancing all night or just visiting with family and friends, this cocktail dress is so comfy and still so stylish.

\$500-\$749



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AND MORE CAN
BE FOUND AT
THEKNOT.COM

NATALIE HARKER

ENGAGED TO: ERIC PASLAY

We have it on good authority that this long-legged beauty already has her dress, and we know she'll look amazing, but we're having fun with this, and since we know that Natalie has a mind for the business and a body that doesn't stop, we're thinking something a little sexy.



▲ Wedding Dress

Allure Couture (C304)

A little sparkle, a little shine and a little surprise in the back, this super-feminine, form-fitted gown is both sweet and sexy.

\$3,000-\$3,499



Reception ◀ Dress

Aria Veronica

We aren't sure if this couple will be cutting a rug all night, but this feathery frock looks amazing even standing still.

\$750-\$999





STACEY BEARD

ENGAGED TO: RAY SCOTT

Stacy takes our breath away with her all-American beauty, so a fairy-tale wedding gown would seem appropriate for her walk down the aisle. She must have a sense of humor to be so compatible with the witty Ray, so how about a pop of color under that gown with a pair of brightly hued slippers?



▲ Wedding Dress

Maggie Sottero (Monalisa Royale)

Encrusted with crystals and beads, and richly draped, this gown would give Stacey the princess treatment for sure.

\$1,000-\$1,499



◀ Reception Dress

Fiesta Collection (Tabada)

Let the bead go on with this little cocktail shift that is more contemporary for the after-party and completely fun.

\$150-\$199

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Renae (left) and the *Larry's Country Diner* cast welcome bluegrass group The Grascals to the set.

Diner Delight

THE BUBBLY RENAE, THE WAITRESS FROM LARRY'S COUNTRY DINER, SERVES UP A SOUTHERN TREAT.

ARLENE RENAE JOHNSON MAY not be a waitress in real life, but she plays one on TV. Fans of RFD's popular series *Larry's Country Diner* know her as Renae the Waitress, a character who serves up a little bit of food and a plateful of comedy on every episode.

Renae, as she likes to be called, shares her life story, as well as a few

anecdotes about the show, in her recently published book, *Diary of a TV Waitress*. You'll also find a recipe for one of her mom's favorite desserts, lemon meringue pie. "My mom was known for her fabulous pies," Renae recalls in the book. "There were many times we asked for a pie instead of a birthday cake. And if you

were sick, I swear one of her pies would heal you."

Experience the healing powers for yourself with the recipe, which you'll find right here. And be sure to join the fun on *Larry's Country Diner*, Sunday nights at 7 p.m. ET on RFD-TV.

— BOB PAXMAN

Mom's Lemon Meringue Pie

SERVES 8

FOR LEMON FILLING:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cornstarch
3 tbsp. flour
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
2 cups water
4 egg yolks, slightly beaten
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon juice
1 tbsp. lemon peel, grated
1 tbsp. butter

Baked pie shell

COMBINE cornstarch, flour, sugar and salt, mixing well. Gradually **ADD** water, stirring until smooth over a medium heat.

Bring to a boil and quickly **STIR** some of the hot mixture into yolks, then pour back into hot mixture. **STIR** to blend.

RETURN to heat and **COOK** on low for 5 minutes.

Remove from heat. **STIR** in lemon juice, lemon peel and butter.

POUR into pie shell.

PREHEAT oven to 400°.

FOR MERINGUE:

4 egg whites
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cream of tartar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sugar

With mixture on medium speed, beat whites and cream of tartar until frothy.

Gradually **ADD** sugar 2 tbsp. at a time. Beat at high speed until stiff peaks form.

SPREAD meringue over lemon filling.

BAKE 7-9 minutes or until the meringue is golden brown.

Let cool.

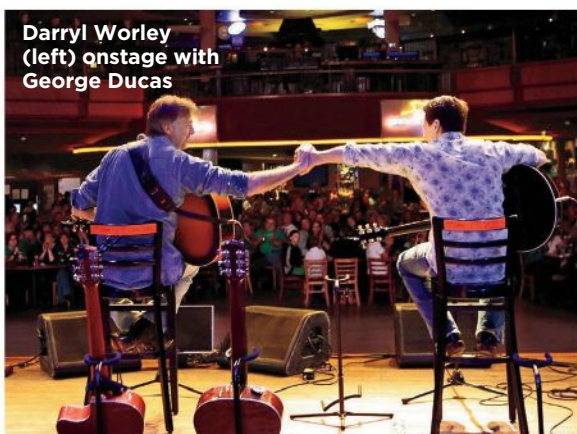


Enjoy your dinner, says actress Renae, but save a little room for a slice of this delicious lemon meringue pie.

HEARTS OF GOLD

The I Am a Woman benefit concert to honor longtime music industry veteran Debbie Ballentine was held at Nashville's Wildhorse Saloon in March. Debbie died earlier this year after a three-year battle with cancer. Numerous country stars, including **LORRIE MORGAN**, **VINCE GILL** and **PAM TILLIS**, teamed up for the concert to help pay the family's medical bills.

Vince Gill performs for a packed Wildhorse Saloon and (below) autographs a guitar, which was auctioned off.



Darryl Worley (left) onstage with George Ducas



Jesse Keith Whitley signs items for auction.



(From left) Michael Bonagura, daughter Alyssa, Kathie Baillie, Jamey Johnson, T.G. Sheppard, Kelly Lang, Lorrie Morgan and Tracy Lawrence gather backstage at the Wildhorse Saloon for the benefit concert.

PHOTOS BY RANDI RADCLIFF

16 Extra Pages!

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SHOCK WAVES

10 OF COUNTRY'S MOST
CONTROVERSIAL SONGS,
FROM "GIRL CRUSH"
TO "THE PILL"





Barroom Buddies



**We sit down for a round or three
with “Hold My Beer” buddies
Randy Rogers and Wade Bowen.**

STORY BY TAMMY RAGUSA
PHOTOS BY TYLER ANDREWS



Wade (left) and Randy enjoy a cold one with *Country Weekly* staff writer Tammy Ragusa.

Before Randy Rogers and Wade Bowen sang the line, *I guess what they say is true, all you need is one good friend*, Merle Haggard and Clint Eastwood professed, *We're barroom buddies and we're doing fine*.

Randy and Wade are doing fine. Casually sipping cold beer from plastic cups, this pair has the entire second floor of Acme Feed & Seed, one of Nashville's hottest new dining and music destinations, in stitches with their zingers, one-liners and amiable digs at each other. Their connection to each other is palpably familial, though they share no bloodline. But from the abundance of laughter and sense of satisfaction they radiate, "doing fine" is an understatement. Wade released a self-titled, independent album last fall to great critical acclaim. Randy is working on a new independent album with legendary producer Buddy Cannon and is also expecting his third daughter. Together, the pair has made magic with their annual Hold My Beer and Watch This tour, which has evolved into their first album together.

And it's good. For those unfamiliar with the Texas troubadours, the album offers solid, fun, real, nonregional country music. Devout Wade and Randy fans won't have to be persuaded to buy it, they already know the goodness that accompanies this duo, but they may be surprised to find that *Hold My Beer, Vol. 1* isn't a

replication of their live show. "We were going to make a live acoustic record to showcase our tour, tell stories and keep our banter and try to do all that, capture the magic that we have in these shows," Wade tells *Country Weekly*. "Then I said, 'You know, we should probably go in and do a couple of studio tracks.' And we went in and did three of them and after we finished tracking the third one, Randy said, 'Hey, man, this is too good to just do three. Let's do a whole record.' And I said, 'I'm in.'"

Working with steel guitar player and producer Lloyd Maines (Pat Green, Robert Earl Keen, Dixie Chicks) on the project wasn't just a great experience; it turned out to be the perfect fit for the guys. "He came in and, first of all, he makes you laugh constantly," Randy remembers. "He's just the funniest, nicest dude and his musicianship alone is just fantastic. He just has a way of communicating with the other guys in the studio in a way that makes you feel like you're about to go kick ass."

"Yeah, I think we both had high expectations before we went in, but after working with him, it exceeded all of those by about a million miles," Wade adds.

But it wasn't just Lloyd's touch that made the album special. The collection of songs mostly tells the backstory of how these brothers from different mothers came to be friends first and then a musical entity. "In the Next Life," I think, is the first song on the album and it tells the story of the friendship, the

way we met, the life we forged on the road separately and how, for both of us, that's been a good thing," explains Randy, before Wade picks up the thread. "That line came from Randy," he says. "I was talking to him on the phone and he was telling me about something he had just done. I can't remember what it was, he was bragging about something cool. And I said, 'Damn, in my next life, I want to come back as you.' And he goes, 'Yeah, buddy. In my next life, I want to be me, too.' I said, 'I'm writing that down. There's our song.'"

Randy and Wade have released the first single and video from the project, the tongue-in-cheek "I've Got Standards," which makes light of both their lack of radio success and the kind of songs preferred by radio. It may ruffle a few feathers in Nashville, but it wasn't intended to be antagonistic, they say. "The song is not a sh*t-talking song. It's about our life, really. I think Wade's highest-charting single went to 38," says Randy. "Thirty-nine," Wade corrects him, chuckling. "And mine was 38," Randy continues with a laugh. "That's what the whole song is really about. We really do play and pack dance halls and have a lot of fun, and we really haven't ever had that really huge radio hit song, either of us, so it's almost a joke at ourselves more than it is about the industry or anyone in particular. I look out there every night and people are twirling around the dance floor and drinking beer and having a helluva time and I

DUDE DUETS

As much as we love Randy and Wade, Willie and Waylon are arguably the kings of man-to-man music. But there are other dude duets we love, too.

Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings

"Mammas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys"

"Good Hearted Woman"

"Luckenbach, Texas"

"Sitting on the Dock of the Bay"

Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard

"Pancho and Lefty"

Willie Nelson and Ray Price

"Faded Love"

Willie Nelson and Toby Keith

"Beer for My Horses"

Alan Jackson and Jimmy Buffett

"It's Five O'Clock Somewhere"

Keith Urban and Eric Church

"Raise 'Em Up"

Dwight Yoakam and Buck Owens

"Streets of Bakersfield"

Travis Tritt and Marty Stuart

"The Whiskey Ain't Workin'"

Keith Whitley and Earl Thomas Conley

"Brotherly Love"

Robert Earl Keen and Lyle Lovett

"T for Texas"

Brad Paisley and Keith Urban

"Start a Band"

Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan

"Girl From the North Country"



Acme Feed & Seed provides a fun backdrop, great food and plenty of cold drinks.



RANDY ROGERS AND WADE BOWEN CONTINUED

think to myself, 'I don't have any hits but they're out there dancing to this song.' And it's because they can two-step to it, it's because the kids I play for know how to dance and know how to ask a girl to dance."

A full dance floor is essentially a standing ovation in Texas, the boys point out. "If they're not clapping, it's because they're making out," Randy says, laughing. "Or holding beers," Wade adds. "You can't clap with a beer in your hand."

"They're either holding beers or dancing and kissing on each other. I watch it happen every night. Or they're fighting. And it's always about a girl," Randy continues. "Unless it's two girls fighting, then it's always about a boy."

Wade and Randy clink cups and the interview turns into a relaxed conversation between 15-year friends. "The first eight years were pretty blurry," Randy recalls. "For sure," Wade agrees, before Randy adds, "It's gotten a little bit better nowadays." Wade hesitates before asking, "Really? Has it?"

So, were there actual 'hold my beer and watch this' moments? "Most of those we can't tell, like the Wormy Dog," Wade says with a laugh, referring to Oklahoma City's Wormy Dog Saloon. "No, we can't talk about that," Randy confirms.

What they *can* talk about and love to talk about are the good times they have shared over the years. "Wade and I have seen our fair share of serious trouble together," remembers Randy. "We've wiggled our way out of a lot of situations that were pretty hairy, whether it be with the police or careers or girls."

"Or whiskey," Wade chimes in.

Randy smiles at the friend he calls "Little Buddy" as he continues. "It sounds cheesy, but we've shared a lot more than the stage together through all the time that we've been together," he says. "Wade has seen me through a divorce and we've both seen each other's kids be born. I'm the godfather of one of his kiddos. A lot more than what happens when you see us for 90 minutes. That's something people should know."

In Wade and Randy's case, having that one good friend seems quite a lot. **CW**

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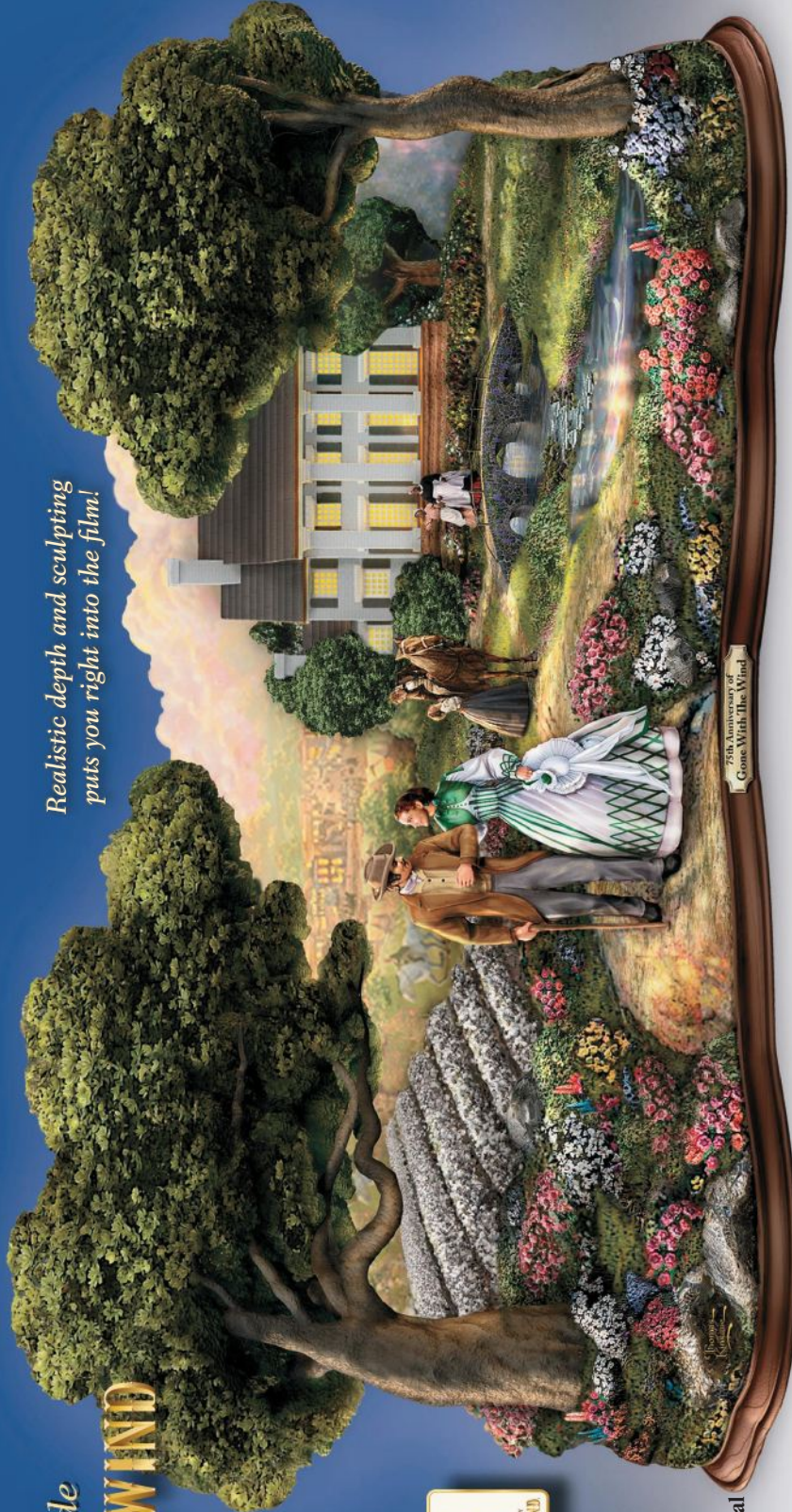
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MUSICAL

LOVE THEM OR HATE THEM, THESE SONGS TRULY PUSHED SOME BUTTONS IN COUNTRY MUSIC.

BY NASH EDITORIAL STAFF

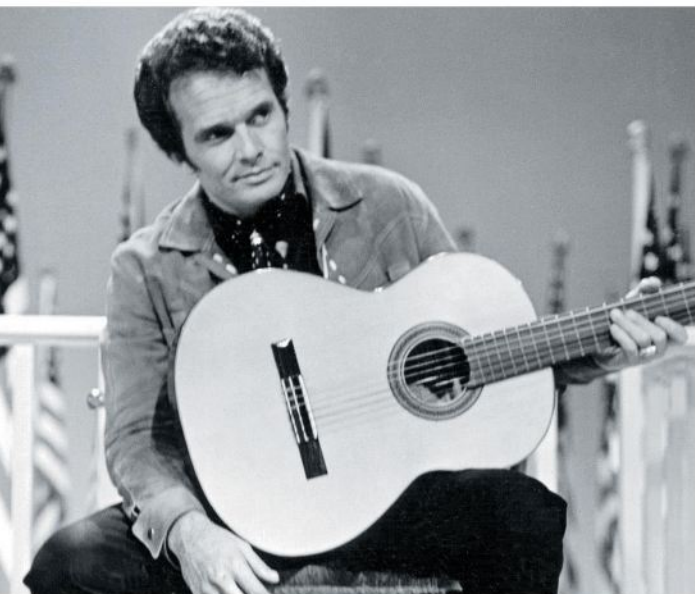
“GIRL CRUSH” LITTLE BIG TOWN

The latest controversial tune, Little Big Town’s “Girl Crush,” has entered public consciousness at a time when the discourse over culture and equality is particularly strident. Structured like a lost pop classic, the slow-burning ballad written by Lori McKenna, Hillary Lindsey and Liz Rose begins with a reverb-heavy guitar arpeggio and Karen Fairchild emoting the line, *I’ve got a girl crush*. That was all some people needed to hear to infer that it was about a lesbian relationship.

Truthfully, it’s a song about loss and envy, and the character embodied by Karen sees her ex with a new woman who apparently offers something she herself cannot. *I want to drown myself in a bottle of her perfume*, Karen sings, supported by the perfect harmonies of her bandmates. It’s a devastating, vivid portrait of a woman shattered and paralyzed by a breakup.



But the conversation has dwelled more on the provocative aspects of the song—of which LBT was surely aware when they recorded it—and its spectral suggestion of same-sex love. Some listeners have reportedly complained to radio, but so far the song hasn’t lost any steam on the charts. And perhaps that’s because, in the larger scheme, it’s a great song no matter how you interpret it.



“OKIE FROM MUSKOGEE” MERLE HAGGARD

Merle got liberals and hippie types riled up with this anthem told from the point of view of a small-town man who stands for good old American values. Written by Merle and his drummer Roy Edward Burris, the song looks at the activities one wouldn’t find folks in Muskogee [a city in Oklahoma] taking part in, such as smoking marijuana, burning their draft cards or challenging any sort of authority in general.

Against the tide of mounting protests against the Vietnam War and civil unrest of the 1960s, Merle’s 1969 single might have seemed archaic and out of step. But through “Okie,” Merle became a voice for Middle America, for those who couldn’t quite comprehend the sweeping societal changes in the country. The song surely reflected the cultural divide that separated young and old, liberal and conservative. Merle has often commented that the views expressed in “Okie” weren’t necessarily his. But whatever the aim, it worked. “Okie From Muskogee” hit No. 1 in 1969 and became one of Merle’s most popular tunes.

MINEFIELD

Controversy can be a double-edged sword in country music. On the one hand, some spirited conversation about a song or album can elevate an artist's profile, particularly in our present on-demand world. On the other hand, there's a real risk of being banished from radio. Here are 10 of country music's most controversial tunes.

"FOLLOW YOUR ARROW"

KACEY MUSGRAVES

Cookie-cutter country music about dirt roads and tailgates? Keep driving because Kacey's 2013 song "Follow Your Arrow," which she wrote with Brandy Clark and Shane McAnally, was aiming at another target. And it hit the bull's-eye, bucking conservative country trends by alluding to sex, drugs and same-sex relationships in a message that championed personal choices with lyrics like *Make lots of noise / Kiss lots of boys / Or kiss lots of girls / If that's something you're into / When the straight and narrow / Gets a little too straight / Roll up a joint, or don't / Just follow your arrow*. Although ultra-right wingers got their undies twisted over it and the song received only modest radio airplay, peaking at No. 43 on *Billboard's* Country Airplay chart, it reached No. 10 on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart, which factors in streaming and digital sales. The people had spoken. And CMA voters listened by naming "Follow Your Arrow" Song of the Year in 2014. The song was also featured on the record *Same Trailer Different Park*, which earned Kacey a Grammy for Country Album of the Year. How's that for aim?



"INDIAN OUTLAW" "RED RAG TOP"

TIM MCGRAW

It may have seemed like a lot of hubbub over nothing, but when radio stations stopped playing Tim McGraw's "Indian Outlaw," it was time to listen up. Riddled with references to wigwams, tomtoms, peace pipes and medicine men, the song was pulled from playlists for fear of offending Native Americans. That gesture was enough to keep "Indian Outlaw" from becoming Tim's first No. 1 hit in 1994, but it went on to achieve gold sales success.

In 2002, Tim released "Red Rag Top," which touched on the extremely taboo subject of abortion. The lyric was hardly crass, referring instead to the expectant mother as a *mother-to-be for two weeks* and the abortion with the line, *We decided not to have a child*. The song was polarizing, especially for morning-drive moms whose daughters didn't understand. Like "Indian Outlaw," the dissonance was enough to keep "Red Rag Top" from the No. 1 slot, but in a possible case of two wrongs making a right, neither controversial tune prevented Tim from reaching stardom.





"THE PILL" LORETTA LYNN

In a different time in our country's history, people were up in arms over women assuming authority over their reproductive ability by electing to use birth control. Loretta Lynn must have had a prophetic vision of how thorny things would be for women when her infamous single "The Pill" was released in 1975. In the song, which was penned by Lorene Allen, Don McHan and T.D. Bayless, the narrator comically admonishes her husband for having all the fun while she's at home having baby after baby with no choice in the matter. But with the titular medication, they're on equal footing and she's considerably happier about her situation. Radio, however, was none too pleased with the subject matter and many stations dropped the song entirely, causing it to stall at No. 5. Nonetheless, the controversy also helped Loretta achieve more attention outside country music than ever before. And as a side effect, women from rural areas like Loretta's Butcher Holler, Ky., became aware that they, too, could choose for themselves.

"IT WASN'T GOD WHO MADE HONKY TONK ANGELS" KITTY WELLS

When Hank Thompson released "The Wild Side of Life" in 1952, singing about his bride-to-be leaving him for another man, one line in particular struck a chord: *I didn't know that God made honky tonk angels.* Songwriter J.D. "Jay" Miller took that and ran with it, quickly writing the answer song "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels." The lyrics blame unfaithful men for creating unfaithful women, saying too many times married men think they're still single, which has caused many a good girl to go wrong. Kitty Wells took a stand for women by recording and releasing the song, a controversial move for a female artist at the time. Some radio stations banned the song and Kitty was prohibited from performing it on the Grand Ole Opry. Still, "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels" launched Kitty's career and became the first No. 1 country hit for a solo female artist. It also helped break down the walls for many females to follow, including Dolly Parton, Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn and Tammy Wynette.



Actresses Lauren Holly (left) and Jane Krakowski (right) help the Dixie Chicks dispose of Earl on the set of their music video.

"GOODBYE EARL" DIXIE CHICKS

When it came time to work on *Fly*, the follow-up to the Dixie Chicks' multiplatinum release *Wide Open Spaces*, members Natalie Maines, Martie Maguire and Emily Robison mixed things up with Dennis Linde's song "Goodbye Earl." The upbeat song's lyrics read like a black comedy that Joel and Ethan Coen could have cooked up, as the female characters, Wanda and Mary Ann, plot the best way to get rid of an abusive ex-husband (Earl) who has walked right through that restraining order, putting Wanda in intensive care. They ultimately decide to dispatch Earl by poisoning his black-eyed peas. Even before its release, the song gained attention with unsolicited airplay in late 1999. After becoming the group's official single, "Goodbye Earl" (along with the Chicks) was the topic of many headlines, but that didn't entirely stop the song from getting airplay. While it peaked at No. 13, "Goodbye Earl" became one of the trio's highest-charting songs on the pop charts as well as one of the most popular tunes of their career.

"THE THUNDER ROLLS"

GARTH BROOKS

He's driving home from *some-where that he never should have been*. She sits at the house waiting, hoping that it's only the stormy weather that's delayed him. The story builds to a tempestuous climax, clearly explaining that the "thunder" in the title no longer refers to the weather conditions but instead the personal clash inside the home. "The Thunder Rolls," written by Garth and Pat Alger, dared to address a domestic situation in graphic terms, particularly in the second verse when the woman smells the perfume on her cheating husband. But the added-on third verse, which fans can find on his *Double Live* album, got tongues wagging and controversy brewing like a literal tempest. The woman retrieves a pistol and vows that he'll not wander on her again. *'Cause tonight will be the last night / She'll wonder where he's been*, the song concludes. Citing issues of gratuitous violence, cable stations TNN and CMT ultimately pulled the video from their rotations. But Garth had the last word: the single hit No. 1 in 1991 and the video went on to win the Country Music Association award for Music Video of the Year.



"SUNDAY MORNING COMING DOWN"

JOHNNY CASH

Rhodes Scholar. U.S. Army Ranger. Janitor. Aspiring singer/songwriter. That was Kris Kristofferson in a nutshell in 1969 when he wrote "Sunday Morning Coming Down" in his dilapidated apartment shortly after his wife had left him. So it's no wonder he composed a tune about a downtrodden, hungover man drinking beer for breakfast and wandering aimlessly, *wishing, Lord, that I was stoned*. Ray Stevens recorded the song in 1969 and it reached No. 55, but it wasn't until Johnny Cash put his deep-bass baritone on it in 1970 that it went to No. 1. However, when Johnny was set to perform the song live on his 1971 television show, *Johnny Cash and*

Friends, network suits demanded that Johnny change the lyrics to *wishing, Lord, that I was home*, in order not to offend family audiences. The Man in Black would not be bogarted, and he performed the song live without excising "stoned," which helped brand Johnny as a player in country's Outlaw movement, while earmarking Kris as a force to be reckoned with in the industry.



"YOU'VE NEVER BEEN THIS FAR BEFORE"

CONWAY TWITTY

Country music has been talking about falling in love, being in love and, to some degree, even making love pretty much since the beginning. But those oh-so clever songwriters have always found ways to dance around the specifics of sex to make it seem less naughty and more innocent. Maybe it was the tumultuous time in the late 1960s and early '70s, but things began to change and country edged ever nearer to the cultural mainstream. Whatever the case, Conway Twitty was compelled to push the envelope when he wrote "You've Never Been This Far Before." Combined with his low, rumbling baritone, Conway's no-detail-spared lyrics took listeners step by step through a night of passionate lovemaking that proved to be a rapturous event even in commercial terms. The song enjoyed a sustained visit on top of the chart for three weeks in 1973. ■

Mother Knows Best

Moms really deserve more than one day of recognition for their contributions, not only to the family, but to society. Heck, to the world! But since we do have one day designated to applaud the person who brought us into this world, why not present her with a little something special. We've found a collection of beautiful, tasty and handy gifts suitable for all kinds of moms, and for kids with all kinds of budgets, that are perfect for this Mother's Day. And for the rest of the days, remember to thank Mom for all she does.



1.



2.

1. TOTESAVVY

New moms don't have to ditch their designer bags to carry baby's necessities. Check out ToteSavvy, the ultimate bag organizer. Turn a chic tote into a perfect diaper bag.

\$79.99

lifeinplaycompany.com

2. MICHEL DESIGN WORKS CANDLES

Beautiful to look at and heavenly to smell, Michel Design candles are scented with lovely aromas of flowers, fruits, herbs and all the things your mother loves.

\$16 - small candle

ferriswheelsandcarousels.com



3.

3. LOVELY CANDY CARAMELS

Is your mother super-sweet? Then she deserves a little something yummy. Lovely Candy Company offers the perfect bite of goodness with their Sea Salt Caramels and Fudgee Rolls.

\$3.99

Available at Target, Whole Foods, HEB and other retailers



4.

4. ESSENZA HAND SOAPS

Eye-appealing and good for the skin, Essenza's hand soaps smell delicious and look lovely by Mom's kitchen or bathroom sink. The bottles are tinted to match her décor.

\$3.99 - 12 oz.

Available at Target, Walgreen's and online at drugstore.com

5. WHOOPIE CREAM SHEA BUTTER

It smells good enough to eat. This luxurious, hydrating lotion, with vitamins A and E, will leave skin feeling like velvet and smelling like cupcakes.

\$14

beautycollection.com

6. KISSY SANDALS

Cute and comfy? Yes, in these cute little sandals from Bare Traps. Available in a variety of colors (but we're partial to this blue), these sweet sandals are perfect for summer.

\$65

footwearunlimited.com

7. MICHEL DESIGN WORKS SCARVES

These beautifully bright and elegant scarves can dress up Mother's favorite denim or complement a sunny sundress. They're also super-soft to knot or drape as desired.

\$50

ferriswheelsandcarousels.com

8. SWISS DIAMOND COOKWARE

Whether Mom is an accomplished chef or just likes to fiddle around in the kitchen, Swiss Diamond's 11-inch nonstick fry pan is an essential for any kitchen.

\$139.96 – with lid,

\$109.99 – without lid

swissdiamond.com

9. STIRCICLES

Mom and her guests can keep their cocktails chilled without watering them down with these stainless-steel swizzle sticks. Freeze them and they're ready to use.

\$23

corkpops.com



CONNECT WITH THE PASSION OF COUNTRY

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COUNTRY FOR LIFE

Sweet Emotions

Zac Brown Band's new album, *Jekyll + Hyde*, is a roller coaster of emotions.

Getting to know Zac Brown over the last 10 years has been an incredible journey. The first time I met Zac was at The Mint in Los Angeles. He was hosting a show for about 250 people, and I loved the band's new music so I volunteered to go. Talk about being blown away! Zac and the guys were out back cooking on the BBQ, and little did I know that we were all part of something called an Eat & Greet, where Zac and the guys just sit around and eat with their fans before the show, chatting and posing for pictures the entire time. What an experience. That show was just the start of something really incredible. The next year ZBB headlined their own show at the Universal Amphitheatre and sold it out. The Zac Brown Experience was real.

Here we are 10 years later and the journey continues in Nashville as I sat down with Zac to talk about his new album, *Jekyll + Hyde*, and find out a few more things that really make Zac who he is today. Zac loves *all* types of music and says his new record reflects that. It will take you to church and really make you emotional with songs like "Dress Blues." It's a very heavy song, and when you hear the taps in the middle, there will be tears and chills for sure. "Homegrown" was the first release, and from the first time you hear it, you can't help but sing along. It's no wonder that the song shot straight to the top of

the charts and was the fastest-rising song of ZBB's career. "Heavy Is the Head" is the one that rocks your world, and Zac says he loved having Chris Cornell of Soundgarden fame sing on it. But there is one song that holds a special place for Zac and that is "I'll Be Your Man." As a dad to four daughters, this song is special for Zac, and he smiles when talking about the way it was recorded. They put everyone in a big circle in the studio with 20 microphones and a six-piece choir and they recorded it in just one take. It really is incredible. And if you like old-school Motown, then "Lovin' You Easy" is your song. Zac says it has a real Stevie Wonder feel to it.

On April 31, a new chapter for Zac Brown Band will be born when the record hits stores, and on May 1, ZBB will kick off their North American stadium tour, with the first show at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena. Zac says "this record will make you rock, cry, dance and most importantly takes you from one extreme to the other"—hence the name, *Jekyll + Hyde*.



Shawn Parr, a nationally recognized disc jockey and television announcer, is host of **NASH NIGHTS LIVE WITH SHAWN PARR**, airing nightly from 7 p.m. to midnight/ET on stations throughout the country.

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AND WINGS



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GUTS-GLORY



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NASH | SOUND BITES

WHAT YOUR FAVORITE STARS ARE SAYING ON NASH-FM

I try to stay as naïve as possible so that I'm not aware as much of the risks, because then I might start overthinking and I might be a little more hesitant to do that.

SAM HUNT
on taking risks with music

You gotta always be you, but you've gotta push yourself to be better and better, more and more outside the box—of whatever box that is that you live in, you know—if you want to be relevant.

LEE BRICE

First music in a while; first album in five years. This single—"Going Out Like That"—it was unanimous for it to be the first single.

REBA MCENTIRE
on the lead single from her new album

Having read a bunch of books, I know what I love about a book and what I don't, and I wanted there to be a ton of pictures, 'cause if you want to make something, I want you to be able to see what it's supposed to look like.

TRISHA YEARWOOD
on her latest cookbook, *Trisha's Table*

She's got a really infectious personality and did a great job out on the tour. It was good to get to hang with her a little more and get to know her a little better than what I had.

JUSTIN MOORE
about tourmate Raelynn

We just tried to have more fun and upbeat songs than we've had in the past.

DARIUS RUCKER
about his new album, *Southern Style*

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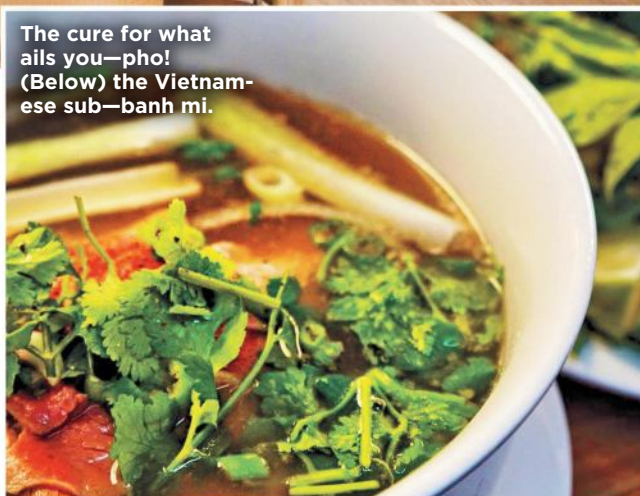
LOVE PEACE & PHO

Sit down. We have some news for you that may come as a surprise. Not everything in every restaurant in Nashville is deep-fried or covered in gravy. In fact, Music City residents are becoming quite the group of foodies, so when Love Peace & Pho opened their doors, they were welcomed with open chopsticks and abundant cravings for the traditional Vietnamese noodle soup made with broth, meat, noodles and the most eye- and taste-appealing array of garnishes, including bean sprouts, cilantro, basil, lime and jalapeño, that you could spoon up. And while pho (pronounced “fuh”) might be what we beat down their doors for, Love Peace & Pho offers a variety of Vietnamese favorites like spring rolls made with shrimp, Granny Smith apples and veggies rolled in rice paper; Vietnamese beef stew; flame-grilled chicken salad made with quail eggs; and banh mi, a traditional regional sandwich made on a French baguette with a choice of proteins, plus pâté, cucumbers, cilantro, jalapeños, pickled carrots and daikon.

Finish off your meal with traditional Vietnamese iced coffee made with Café Du Monde and sweetened condensed milk. *Tho’m ngon.* (Delicious!)

— TAMMY RAGUSA

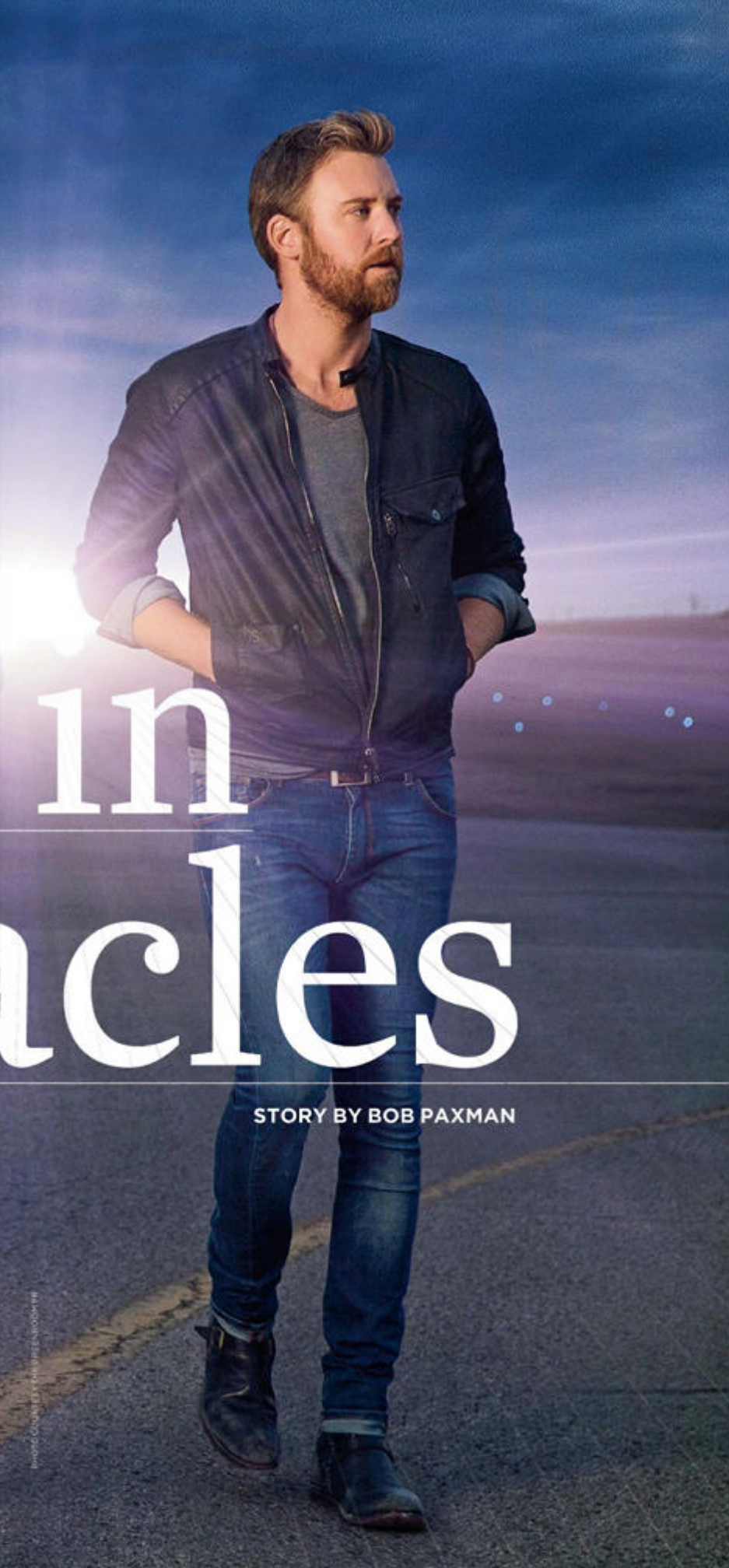
The cure for what ails you—pho! (Below) the Vietnamese sub—banh mi.



A full-page photograph of Hillary Scott and her Lady Antebellum mates walking on a paved road towards the camera. The scene is set at sunset or sunrise, with a warm, orange and blue sky. Hillary Scott is on the right, wearing a light blue leather jacket over a dark top and blue jeans. She has long, wavy brown hair and is looking directly at the camera. To her left, a man with a beard and brown hair is walking, wearing a black t-shirt and blue jeans. He is holding a black jacket in his right hand. The road has a yellow dashed line in the center, and the background shows a hazy horizon.

Believing Miracles

**HILLARY SCOTT AND
HER LADY ANTEBELLUM
MATES PARTNER WITH
CHILDREN'S MIRACLE
NETWORK TO HELP KIDS.**



STORY BY BOB PAXMAN

Hillary Scott of Lady Antebellum shares a passion with her group-mates Charles Kelley and Dave Haywood, but it doesn't necessarily involve music. All three are committed to helping better the lives of children, not only in the United States but truly all over the world.

"That is why we started LadyAID," says Hillary, calling on a rare day off from the business of making music. Hillary's referring to the charitable initiative the trio started in 2012 that focuses on raising awareness and funds for children in need (see sidebar on page 48). "We are interested in helping different organizations and giving our time, and this seemed to be the best way to do that. We can do it all with one effort. We each have our individual organizations that we want to help."

This year, the trio is partnering with the Children's Miracle Network for various support programs and charitable opportunities. "We got involved with them through LadyAID," Hillary says. "One of our programs helps facilities like the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt [in Nashville], which is affiliated with Children's Miracle Network. They do such amazing work and we're so glad to be partnering with them."

Lady A got the ball rolling right away with Children's Miracle Network, when they performed at the organization's event in Orlando in November 2014. "We met Marie Osmond [one of CMN's original founders] and got to meet some of the families and the kids," Hillary recalls. When the group begins its tour in May, a portion of the proceeds from most shows will be donated to LadyAID, with Children's Miracle Network as one of the beneficiaries. "We're going to have a

Network Engineering

John Lauck of the Children's Miracle Network explains the mission and why he loves working with country artists.

Children's Miracle Network is a familiar name to most of us. But do we really know the important work and vital mission of this organization? John Lauck, president and CEO of Children's Miracle Network, helps to shed some light on the organization's efforts—and explains how you can get involved as well.

Basically, Children's Miracle Network saw its beginnings in 1983, founded by entertainers Marie Osmond and John Schneider, along with two businessmen. "Our mission is that we raise funds and awareness for children's hospitals. We support 170 hospitals in the United States and Canada."

Most every major city in the U.S. has a hospital affiliated with Children's Miracle Network. Many of the children who are admitted suffer from life-threatening diseases, such as cancer. Others are battling a traumatic injury or challenged with genetic illnesses. The funds raised for Children's Miracle Network can be used in a variety of ways, but one component stays constant, as John explains.

"What makes our model unique is that all the money we raise stays local," he says. "That money goes directly to the hospitals and the kids and it's unrestricted, meaning that the hospitals can use it where there is the greatest need." For example, some funds may go toward research or for equipment. Others may be used to help with costs that are not covered by medical insurance. The aim, of course, is to save and improve the lives of as many children as possible.

Funds are raised through a number of conventional programs. "We raise a good bit of money with our corporate sponsors," John says. "We have about 90 corporate sponsors, such as Walmart, Costco, IHOP and others. We also do radiothons across the country where we raise funds."

Some additional programs are quite innovative and definitely include a fun aspect, while never losing sight of the cause. "We have dance marathons at

Charles, Hillary and Dave (right) meet with Children's Miracle Network CEO John Lauck.



LADY A & JOHN COURTESY THE GREEN ROOM PR; PERFBYINPHOTO.COM

several colleges,” John points out. “That is one of our fastest-growing programs. It’s a great way for college students to get involved in the community and help raise money for local hospitals.” The marathons, John adds, bear some similarity to the old-time dance contests. “You don’t have to dance for a full 24 hours,” he says, “but you do have to stay on your feet the entire time, because it’s symbolic of the notion that kids who are injured or ill can’t take a break from their sicknesses. This is a fun way for the students to get involved, but it’s also very fulfilling.”

This year, Children’s Miracle Network is partnering with Lady Antebellum and the trio’s LadyAid charity for a series of events. “They are supporting us in all of their concerts,” John says. “And they will be doing hospital visits during the year.” The trio of Hillary Scott, Charles Kelley and Dave Haywood appeared at one of the organization’s events late last year and had an immediate, resounding impact, John delightfully notes.

“They got some of the kids onstage with them to help sing a couple of songs,” John says. “It was a great moment. They’re so good at getting the audience involved. I think this will be a great partnership.”

Children’s Miracle Network enjoys a long history with the country music community. Dierks Bentley has been an avid supporter through the years with

his Miles and Music for Kids celebrity motorcycle ride and concert in Nashville, which raises funds for the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt. LeAnn Rimes was also involved with Children’s Miracle Network for a number of years. “Sara Evans and Mark Wills have done events with us,” John adds. “Hunter Hayes has done a number of hospital visits.”

Obviously, the relationship works. “We love the country community,” John says, “because one of the things we admire about the music is the storytelling. In all of our efforts, it’s important for us to tell the story. We make liberal use of what we call ‘miracle stories’ or ‘champion stories,’ which are stories about these kids and what they have been through to overcome their challenges. The idea is if you want these miracles to continue, you need to support your local hospitals.”

And there are plenty of ways to get behind your local facility. “One way is to go to our website and make a donation,” John says. “You can designate the hospital of your choice. People can also certainly volunteer. Fundraising is so important,” John adds after a pause. “For so many of these hospitals, fundraising is the difference between being able to keep the doors open and operate and not being able to do that.”

To find out how you can help, please visit childrensmiraclenetworkhospitals.org.



**Children's
Miracle Network
Hospitals**



John Schneider and Marie Osmond hosted the first Children’s Miracle Network telethon in 1983. (Right) Lady Antebellum will donate portions of ticket sales from their current tour to their LadyAID foundation.





First Aid

Lady Antebellum's charitable foundation, LadyAID, is all about the kids.

When Hillary, Charles and Dave announced their LadyAID charitable initiative in 2012, they made sure to emphasize that children would be the main beneficiaries. And that's still the LadyAID aim—to bring awareness and support for children in need on a truly global level.

LadyAID, a component of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, which administers the charity, reaches children in Tennessee through grants to such organizations as the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, affiliated with the Children's Miracle Network. The charity also includes efforts on a national and global basis, supporting myLIFESpeaks, which raises money for orphanages and facilities in Haiti, and the UN Refugee Agency. At the press event announcing LadyAID, the trio expressed their desire to make children their number one priority.

"I've been personally touched by the hospital visits that we've made around the U.S. for the last couple of years," Charles noted. "The thing that we all agree on is helping kids, and there's so much need out there. I think we can raise a lot of money with this effort." Dave, who has one child, son Cash, pointed out that establishing LadyAID put in motion a long-time goal of the group, which is to help children in need.

LadyAID is funded by donations and fundraising efforts like the group's Ping Pong & Songs charity event that they hosted during the 2013 CMA Music Festival in Nashville. Those good works continue today with a variety of programs.

LADY ANTEBELLUM CONTINUED

cool show this year with our opening acts Sam Hunt and Hunter Hayes," Hillary says. "And I've been saying that the ladies are going to especially love this show because of all the eye candy up there onstage," she adds with a laugh. "We think that's a great way for fans to enjoy some great music and know that part of their ticket is going to go to a wonderful cause. It's going to be great for everyone."

The group will also make visits to area hospitals during various stops on the tour. "It is amazing to see the work that these hospitals do," Hillary says. "I don't have the facts and figures in front of me, but I was really surprised when I read about how much it takes each year to keep a facility running"

As she reflects on her visits to Children's Miracle Network hospitals, Hillary can't help but think about her daughter, Eisele, who turns 2 in July. She's grateful that Eisele is in good health and cared for in every way. But should extra care ever be required, Hillary knows that expert help is truly right around the corner.

"We are so lucky to have a facility like Vanderbilt Children's Hospital right here in Nashville, where we live," Hillary says softly. "We all know that if any of our children ever needed help or special care, that would be the first place we would go. They would be in great hands." Hillary isn't the only doting parent in Lady A. Dave and his wife, Kelli, welcomed son Cash in September 2014.

Lady Antebellum's charitable efforts for the year will also include a program with the Quicken Loans company, part of the trio's 7FOR7 initiative. The trio and Quicken Loans are teaming up to award seven lucky fans with mortgage payments for one year, at seven stops during their Wheels Up 2015 Tour. Fans must enter a sweepstakes in order to qualify to win the mortgage payments.

For Hillary, the most meaningful portion of her charity endeavors is



“It is amazing to see the work that these hospitals do. I was surprised when I read about how much it takes to keep a facility running.”

— HILLARY SCOTT



Dave and Charles hosted a ping-pong fundraiser in 2013; (left) Lady A visiting children at Monroe Carell.

the personal touch. Nothing comes close to the fulfillment of one-on-one contact. That’s the main reason she and her bandmates relish the hospital visits where they interact with the kids and their families.

Hillary compares it to her first visits to Haiti through myLIFESpeaks, an organization dedicated to helping orphans and speaking for those who

cannot speak for themselves. “The first time I ever traveled there,” she recalls, “I thought the way a lot of people do before a trip like that. You know, I’m going to hug some kids and help make everyone feel better. But what you just don’t understand until you get there is that you’re so blessed by what you really experience. When you get to know the people,

that’s the big difference. That’s why we love making the hospital visits.”

Fans can certainly help Children’s Miracle Network as they attend one of Lady A’s concerts during their tour. You can find more tour information at ladyantebellum.com. “We’re excited to get this underway,” Hillary says. “It’s going to be a great year.” **CW**

BRINGING THE HEAT



WHO IS COUNTRY'S HOTTEST BACHELOR?

The terminally single like to bemoan the notion that all the good ones are taken. But considering that single people now outnumber married people in the United States, there has to be more than a few diamonds in the rough out there just waiting for the right one to come along. In country music, there are quite a few bachelors who fit that profile. Here are the 10 hottest, as voted by you, the *Country Weekly* readers.

A portrait of Chris Young, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark blue velvet jacket over a dark green t-shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a dark, textured grey.

Chris Young

1

HOT HIT

"Who I Am With You"

HEAT FACTOR

He's as real and true as they come.

SELL THE SIZZLE

When it comes to having everything a woman wants in a man, Chris Young has it. He has it all: devastatingly handsome, with expressive hazel eyes, gobs of russet curls, a heartwarming smile, dimples (oh, those dimples) and a physique designed for the NFL. But Chris is also one of the most charming men in country music, with a ready laugh that makes everyone—male and female alike—feel at ease. An engaging conversationalist, he's the perfect party companion. He's also hard-working, a family man, an innate protector and, as we all know, incredibly talented.

A full-page portrait of country music artist Scotty McCreery. He is smiling, wearing a dark blue blazer over a patterned button-down shirt, and has his hands in his pockets. A large, stylized white letter 'S' is positioned to the right of his head, partially overlapping the text.

Scotty McCreery

HOT HIT

"See You Tonight"

HEAT FACTOR

Try to resist those clean-cut good looks and puppy dog eyes.

SELL THE SIZZLE

He's the guy you want to bring home to Mom and Dad. Scotty's got smarts, talent and a gentle nature that all combine to make a winning combo. But he's not afraid to cut loose once in a while, as he did in his video for "See You Tonight." It's been said that ladies go for the bad boys. But here's a good guy you can warm up to.



3 Gary Allan

HOT HIT

"Nothing On but the Radio"

HEAT FACTOR

The deep, sexy eyes say everything you need to know.

SELL THE SIZZLE

The ladies have forever swooned over Gary's dark good looks, bad-boy raspy voice and that brooding demeanor. He's sort of mysterious, never revealing too much about himself, but that has only added to his appeal. Plus, he's raised three lovely daughters practically on his own, which never hurts a guy's "sexy" quotient.

A portrait of country music artist Dwight Yoakam. He is wearing a light brown Stetson hat, a dark suit jacket, a white collared shirt, and a blue and white vertically striped tie. He has long, wavy hair and is looking off to the side with a serious expression. The background consists of vertical stripes in shades of pink, purple, and blue.

L Dwight Yoakam

HOT HIT

"The Heart That You Own"

HEAT FACTOR

All we know about Dwight is still infinitely less than all that remains unknown.

SELL THE SIZZLE

The age-old question of what's under Dwight Yoakam's low-tilted Stetson has a relatively simple answer: six feet of heat. The high-grade, hard-core honky-tonker with a distinctive Kentucky croon has been on the country music scene for 30 years, but he's still an enigma wrapped in a riddle wrapped in skin-tight Levi's. When you start to factor in his onstage boot scooting, lethal acting chops and bad-boy swagger, well, that's when his heat factor starts to boil the mercury and . . . be still beating hearts.



5 Craig Wayne Boyd

HOT HIT

"My Baby's Got a Smile on Her Face"

HEAT FACTOR

Try not to get lost in those pale blue eyes.

SELL THE SIZZLE

Who doesn't love an underdog? After toiling in Nashville's unfriendly trenches for a decade, Craig Wayne emerged as the clear victor on Season 7 of NBC's *The Voice*. Clearly, his platinum pipes brought him to the show, and the careful tutelage of coach Blake Shelton didn't hurt, but America latched on to his smoldering gaze, gritty work ethic and stage-ready swagger. It's always a treat to see one of the good guys win.





6 Chuck Wicks

HOT HIT

"Hold That Thought"

HEAT FACTOR

He'll always make you laugh.

SELL THE SIZZLE

There's no doubt that Chuck Wicks is physically attractive. OK, he's hotter than fireworks in July. Truth is, if Disney's Prince Charming came to life, it would be Chuck Wicks. But Chuck is also a lesson in contrasts: tall, dark and ruggedly handsome with the lithe physique of an MLB pitcher and a touch of bad-boy confidence. But the other side of Chuck is less bad boy and more boy next door. His smile lights up an entire football stadium and his sense of humor is half frat house and half goofball. But he's also sensitive, thoughtful, a dynamite dancer and a soulful singer . . . which is really the tipping point.

CHUCK COURTESY MCGRAW HILL ENTERTAINMENT; EASTON COURTESY SCHMIDT RELATIONS

A portrait of Easton Corbin, a young man with short brown hair and light eyes, wearing a dark blue denim jacket over a white shirt and a red patterned tie. He is sitting and looking directly at the camera. The background is a dark wooden lattice.

7 Easton Corbin

HOT HIT
"Clockwork"

HEAT FACTOR
Every girl is crazy 'bout a sharp-dressed man.

SELL THE SIZZLE
It's easy to see why the ladies go for Easton's boyish charm and guy-next-door good looks. Easton's been open to letting his sexy side shine through, especially in the red-hot videos for "All Over the Road" and "Clockwork." And unlike many of his counterparts, Easton prefers the dressed-up look, going for jackets instead of sleeveless tees. Classy indeed!

8 Kip Moore

HOT HIT

"Hey Pretty Girl"

HEAT FACTOR

Washboard abs never hurt.

SELL THE SIZZLE

If for some strange reason you ever start to feel sorry for Kip Moore, keep in mind two

things: he makes country music for a living and surfs in his spare time. Sign me up for that life. The former two-sport college jock-turned-country crooner makes the ladies swoon with his restless, heartland spirit . . . not to mention his muscle-sleek physique. Put a mic in his hands or a board at his feet and he'll crush both the stage and the waves. It's good to be Kip.





9 Brett Eldredge

HOT HIT

"Mean to Me"

HEAT FACTOR

His voice can go from purr to growl at a moment's notice.

SELL THE SIZZLE

Come on, be honest. We've all kind of fallen in love with amiable

Brett Eldredge since he opened himself up like few others on Twitter and Facebook. Who doesn't rush to Brett's Instagram page to see what goofiness he's up to or what tropical waters he's fishing (sometimes with no shirt)? But honestly, no shirt or decked out in a suit and tie à la Frank Sinatra, with his bright blue eyes and curls begging to be touched, Brett is as handsome as they get. And while his zany sense of humor may have endeared us to his personality, and his classic style and all-American good looks caught our eye, Brett's hotness is as much about his music as anything else. Thoughtful lyrics paired with a passionate, almost R&B baritone? You can fly us right over the moon.



10 Sam Hunt

HOT HIT

"Take Your Time"

HEAT FACTOR

I mean, have you seen him?

SELL THE SIZZLE

Few country artists of late have inspired the same combination of intense desire and jealousy as one-man global warming threat Sam Hunt. The towering former college quarterback has a face that looks like the painstaking work of a Renaissance master, and it's perpetually adorned with a five-o'clock shadow. To call him built is an understatement: those guns are military grade and his shoulders are broad enough to need their own zip code. On top of his imposing stature, Sam's debut album, *Montevallo*, features some of the sexiest music we've heard in the past couple years. In his case, the old saying is true: some guys have it all. CW

[ON TOUR]

DON WILLIAMS

April 17

Peshawbestown, Mich.

Leelanau Sands
Casino Showroom

April 18

Shipshewana, Ind.

Blue Gate Theater

April 19

Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

Crystal Grand
Music Theatre

April 21

St. Charles, Ill.

Arcada Theatre

April 23

North Canton, Ohio

Canton Palace Theatre

April 24

Hopewell, Va.

Beacon Theatre

April 25

Franklin, N.C.

Smoky Mountain
Center

May 14

Eau Claire, Wis.

State Theatre

May 15

Saint Michael, N.D.

Spirit Lake
Casino

May 16

Fort Yates, N.D.

Pavilion at
Prairie Knights
Casino

May 17

Onamia, Minn.

Grand Casino
Mille Lacs

May 20

Omaha, Neb.

Kiewit Convert
Hall at The Holland

May 21

Salina, Kan.

Stiefel Theatre

May 22

Bartlesville, Okla.

Bartlesville
Community
Center

May 23

Lula, Miss.

Isle of Capri Casino

Sept. 9

Dodge City, Kan.

United Wireless Arena

Sept. 10

Colorado Springs,

Colo.

Pikes Peak

Center

Sept. 11

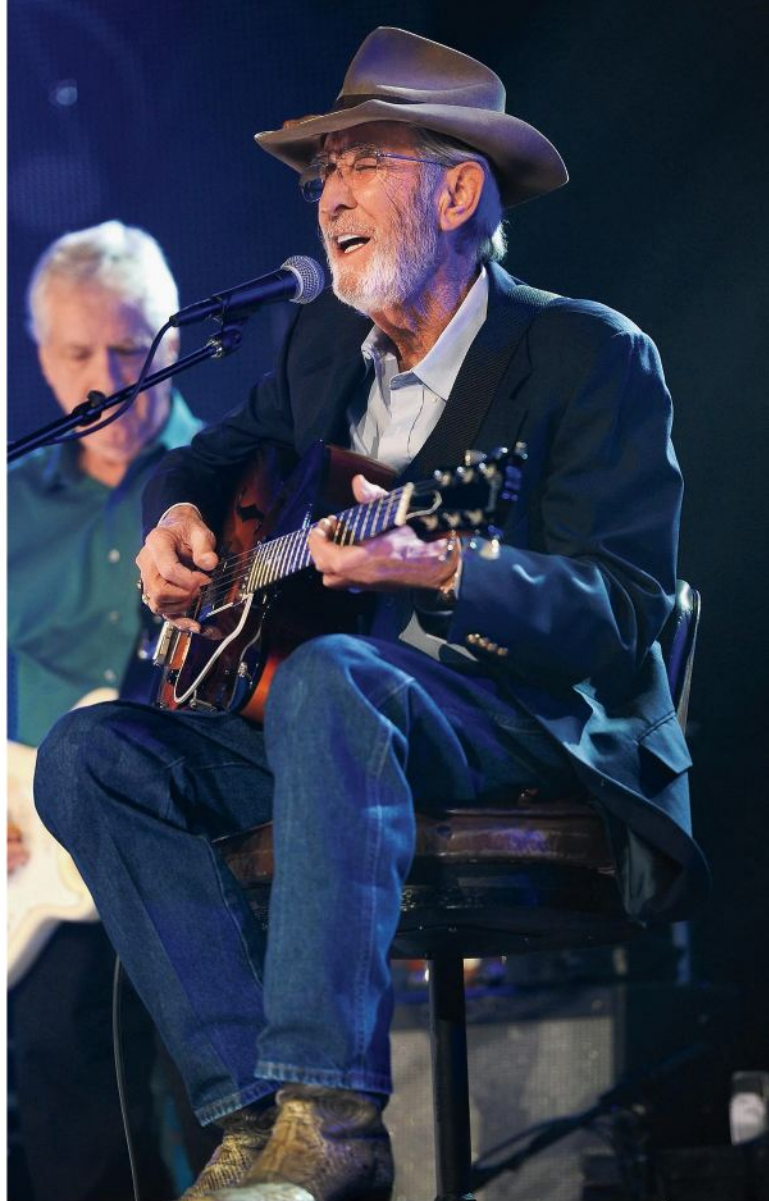
Deadwood, S.D.

Deadwood Mountain
Grand Hotel

Sept. 14

Winnipeg, Manitoba,
Canada

Pantages
Playhouse
Theatre



Sept. 15

Regina,
Saskatchewan,
Canada

Conexus
Centre
of the Arts

Sept. 16

Saskatoon,
Saskatchewan,
Canada

TCU Place

Sept. 17

Edmonton,
Alberta, Canada

Northern
Alberta Jubilee
Auditorium

Sept. 19

Calgary, Alberta,
Canada

Jack Singer Hall
Epcor Centre

Sept. 20

Kelowna, British
Columbia, Canada

Kelowna Community
Theatre

Sept. 24

Pocatello, Idaho

Stephens Performing
Arts Center

Sept. 25-26

Wendover, Nev.

Peppermill Concert Hall

[**CATCHING UP WITH**]

JUST FOR LAUGHS

Ray Stevens brings back the laughter with his first all-new comedy album in seven years and explains what “melancholy fescue” means.

STORY BY BOB PAXMAN



RAY BY SHANNON FONTAINE/ABSOLUTE PUBLICITY; RETRO PHOTO OF RAY BY CHARLIE GILLET/GETTY IMAGES

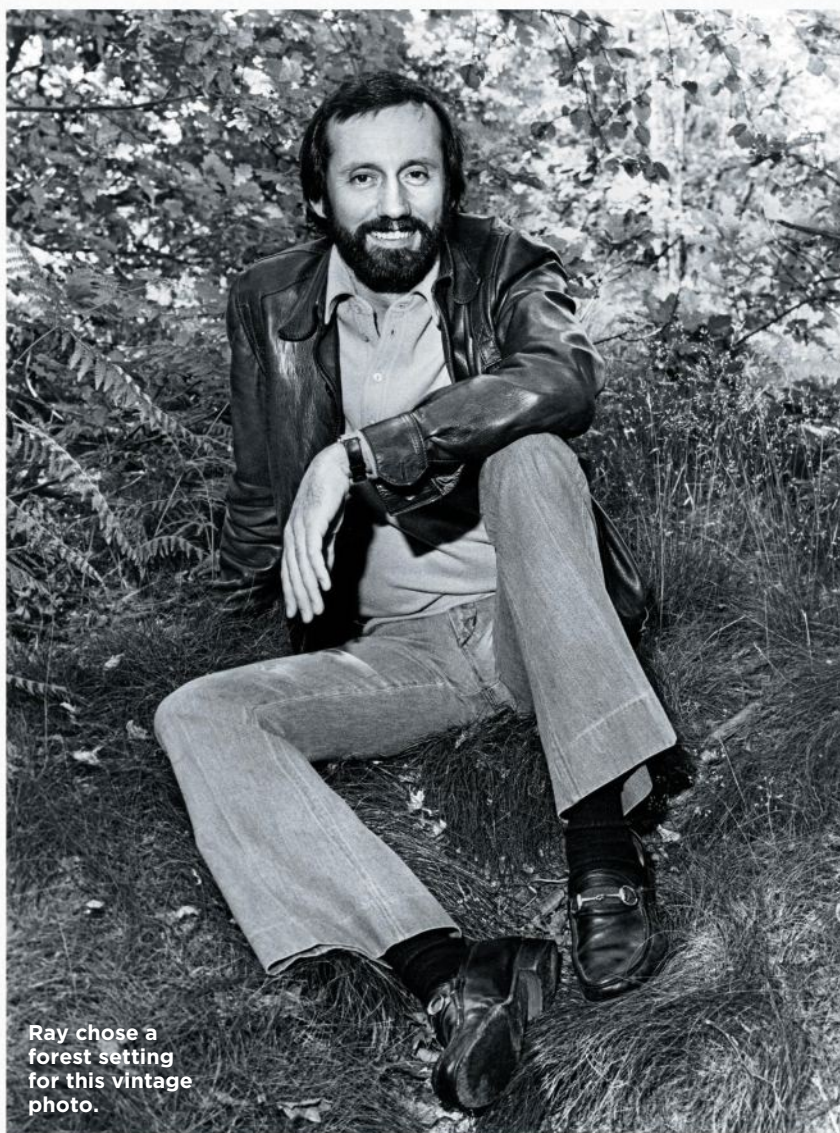
IT'S A CHILLY, RATHER overcast day in Nashville, but that hasn't stopped Ray Stevens from showing up at his office. The 76-year-old singer/songwriter/comedian spends most of his weekdays inside his spacious office, which includes a full recording studio, located in the center of Music Row. Unlike most men his age, Ray actually looks forward to working and can't imagine a day without being productive in some form or fashion.

For Ray, that means writing songs, recording and, yes, traveling. He has a series of concert dates on the books to promote his new album, *Here We Go Again!* It marks Ray's first all-comedy album in a little more than seven years, which should come as joyous news to fans who first became acquainted with the Georgia-born entertainer through side-splitting tunes like "Ahab the Arab," "The Streak," "It's Me Again, Margaret" and a host of others. Ray had a hand in writing many of the selections and laid down the tracks at the office studio.

And as he tells it, that's hardly the only project on his usually full plate. Ray talked about the new album, other projects in the can and defying the so-called experts in a wide-ranging conversation, peppered with Ray's trademark wacky humor and observations.

First of all, he maintains the busy schedule for the simplest of reasons. "I love to record," he says with a smile. "I have this wonderful studio and we get in there and we record all kinds of things. I've got four or five albums already done that are not out yet. But this is the first comedy album I've put out in some time. I think it's seven years," he adds, flashing a sort of impish grin, "but who's counting?"

Ray's penchant for parody strikes right off the bat with the lead track, "Taylor Swift Is Stalkin' Me," which pokes good-natured fun at the omnipresent star. The song centers on a somewhat dotty old man who's under the illusion, or delusion, that the superstar singer is following him at every turn. A video starring Ray as the elderly



Ray chose a forest setting for this vintage photo.



gent has also been filmed for the song.

"I have a friend who lives in Florida, Chuck Redden, who's in radio and he loves to write songs," Ray

says. "He came up with the idea for the Taylor song and he sent it up here. I thought the idea was wonderful but didn't much care for the lyrics." Ray's frequent collaborator Buddy Kalb rewrote portions of the lyrics while Ray composed the melody. "We split it three ways," Ray makes sure to note. "It was done in fun and I think Taylor would take it the right way. There is certainly nothing mean-spirited about it."

Ray also pays respectful homage to one of his musical idols, Ray Charles, with a lively bluegrass version of Ray's R&B classic "What'd I Say." Obviously, Ray's not poking fun at the late, great Ray Charles, although his revamped

TITLE WAVES

YOU CAN SPOT RAY STEVENS' KNACK FOR COMEDY TUNES JUST BY THEIR TITLES. HERE ARE SOME OF RAY'S BRIGHTEST—AND LONGEST.

"Jeremiah Peabody's Poly Unsaturated Quick Dissolving Fast Acting Pleasant Tasting Green and Purple Pills"

Ray's pop chart debut in 1961, which landed at a respectable No. 35.

"Freddy Feel-good (And His Funky Little Five Piece Band)"

1966 pop entry.

"Gitarzan"

A funky guitar-playing Tarzan type swings in the jungle.

"Mississippi Squirrel Revival"

A No. 20 hit on the country charts.

"Would Jesus Wear a Rolex"

A commentary on TV evangelists.

"The Day I Tried to Teach Charlene MacKenzie How to Drive"

A title that speaks for itself.



Ray performs his comedy hit "Gitarzan" with a hairy sidekick. (Below) Ray looks the executive part as he relaxes in his Music Row office in 1996.



RAY STEVENS CONT.

"What'd I Say" might give you a chuckle as you hear how perfectly the song meters for a bluegrass style.

"That was always one of my favorite songs," Ray says, thinking back to Mr. Charles' 1959 hit. "I thought a bluegrass version of 'What'd I Say' would be cool." For the vocal inflection, Ray hearkened back to another musical giant, bluegrass legend Dr. Ralph Stanley. "I tried to imitate him because he has that very

unique sound to his voice," Ray explains. "I played a couple of his records before putting the vocal on it. I got close, anyway."

At this point, Ray takes a different path in the conversation to allude to an album that's recorded and ready to go. "One that I have 'in the can,' as they say, is called *Melancholy Fescue*," Ray explains, smiling wryly. "I might have to put a subtitle under it, like 'High-Class Bluegrass.' The concept is songs that you would never expect

to hear as bluegrass, like 'MacArthur Park.' And then I thought, well, let's put a symphony sound behind these things." With the excitement of a youngster and his new toys, Ray adds, "We've got kettle drums and strings and harps, and we did it all right here."

Back to *Here We Go Again!*, Ray gets topical with "There Must Be a Pill for This," which certainly speaks to a certain generation, and downright political in "You Didn't Build That" and "Come to the U.S.A.," a



An accomplished pianist, Ray wails on the ivories during a special show at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in 2014.

not-so-gentle jab at immigration policies. It's hardly the first time Ray has employed satire to make a political point, as in "We the People" and "Throw the Bums Out" (take a wild guess at who the "bums" are). "Every time I turn on the news, I get depressed," says Ray, definitely not in funnyman mode at the moment. "Maybe that's why I write these."

Ray cultivated a good portion of his fame through comedy, but he remembers a time in the early days

when the experts tried to talk him out of the funny business, you might say. "Back when I was trying to get my comedy records played at radio," he begins, "a lot of the radio guys would tell me, 'We don't play comedy songs.' Their thing was that comedy was a fast burn, you know, here today and gone tomorrow."

But the longevity of "Ahab the Arab," "The Streak," "Gitarzan," "Mississippi Squirrel Revival" and others proved that Ray was on the right track all

along. "You can remember a comedy song like that," Ray says, snapping his fingers for emphasis. "Of course, people remember ballads and the big hits, but a comedy song will just leap into your memory."

He deftly defied the experts again in the early 1990s, this time on the issue of music videos. Ray concocted the idea of placing eight music videos on one collection, to be sold as a VHS package.

"The VHS machine had just come out," Ray re-

calls, "and I thought, well, people need something to play on them. I went to the record company and asked if they wanted to finance these eight videos. And they told me, 'No, videos are used to promote records.' We produced the eight videos ourselves."

Ray released the video collection, billed as *Ray Stevens: Comedy Video Classics*, in 1992 and promoted it strictly through television direct marketing. It sold 5 million copies, an unheard-of tally at the time for this type of product. "I didn't hear a word out of the record label," Ray muses with a smile of satisfaction.

Some 25 years later, Ray is still shooting videos and taking care of business. His lone health scare came in 1999, when a PSA test revealed early-stage prostate cancer, forcing him to cancel appearances. After successful surgery, Ray was given a clean bill of health. "We check it every year, and I'm still clean," Ray pronounces, knocking the wood on his desk. "That was over 15 years ago. I really don't have any other health problems."

With upbeat attitude and a still-lean frame, Ray foresees no reason to hang up his performing cha-peau. "I just don't want to retire," he says, leaning back in his chair. "I have seen guys retire, at a younger age than I am, and it doesn't work out too well. I don't want to hang it up until I have to. I hope I can keep going for some time," Ray adds, before a short pause. "Because there is still more to do." **CW**



SINGLES

BLAKE SHELTON

“Sangria”

WARNER BROS.

GRADE: A

Since signing on as a coach for NBC’s *The Voice*, stepping into a hosting role for the ACM Awards and becoming a favorite on the late-night talk show circuit, Blake Shelton has gradually and easily become a nationally recognized celebrity. And we’re the first on our feet to applaud his success in all of his ventures. Simply put, Blake is good people.

He’s also versatile, and not just in his varied media ventures. Since the release of his 2001 self-titled debut, most of Blake’s albums feature a cut or two that allow him to stretch out vocally and stylistically. And he has done so aptly and with great confidence. Because of that, some of

those songs, like his current single, “Sangria,” are making their way onto radio airwaves as singles. And goodie for us!

“Sangria” is as tasty a treat for the ears as the wine, fruit and brandy concoction is for the lips. With a subtle and appropriately Spanish flavor, reminiscent of Tracy Byrd’s “Let Me Be in Love,” this cha-cha is super-sexy, thanks in large part to a suggestive lyric from songwriters J.T. Harding, Josh Osborne and Trevor Rosen, and a provocative performance from Blake himself that walks the line between innocent flirtation and a heady proposal. An intoxicating groove and haunting repetition add to the arrangement, which builds to a crescendo without distracting from Blake’s vocal.

— TAMMY RAGUSA

AT A GLANCE: Drunk on the goodness.

RAY SCOTT

"Ain't Always Thirsty"

DECIBEL NASHVILLE
GRADE: **B**

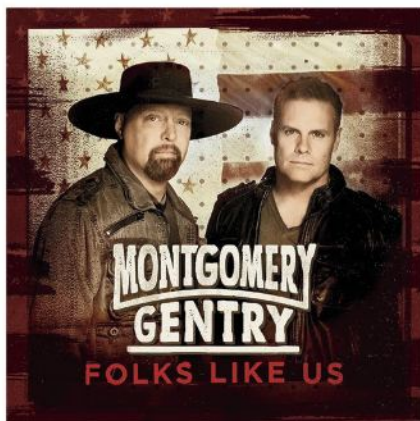
Ray Scott remains one of our undiscovered treasures. Not that he doesn't have a loyal following, but more folks in the mainstream need to hear a guy who renders real country music in a unique, world-weary way. "Ain't Always Thirsty" serves up a slice of homespun philosophy that aims to explain the life of a wayward soul who doesn't have to feel pain to take medication and who declares, "I ain't always thirsty when I drink." The melody is classic country, slow but not plodding, laden with crying pedal steel and reverberating guitars that might unfortunately remind you of how your head feels when hung over. Its pace is likely a bit too slowed down and the message far too painful



to have a chance at country radio, so you may have to scout your favorite online service to hear it. Ray's previous outing, "Drinkin' Beer," proved a more enjoyable record, but "Ain't Always Thirsty" proves another fine showcase of Ray's skill at interpreting gritty, traditional country.

— BOB PAXMAN

AT A GLANCE: A sobering look at a drinking man.



MONTGOMERY GENTRY

"Folks Like Us"

BLASTER RECORDS

GRADE: **C**

Country music has taken big steps in the recent years on social issues, with numerous songs adopting a "live and let live" stance regarding diversity.

Montgomery Gentry's latest single, "Folks Like Us," is not one of those songs. Instead, this rocker taps into a

desire for sameness, because heaven knows, *this ol' world ain't got enough boot-wearin', God-fearin' folks like us*, as the hook states. The values of faith, family and community that Eddie Montgomery and Troy Gentry describe in "Folks Like Us" are totally valid topics for exploration, but this instance plays it all wrong by seeming to suggest that they're reserved specifically for the "real" (their word) folks living along America's rural routes.

On top of that, the track itself sounds like generic Southern rock—a basic template wiped of personality or distinguishing features (because that's fancy-pants cityfolk stuff). These fairly major concerns aside, Eddie and Troy still sound great together and the chorus melody is catchy enough to have you humming it after a couple plays. If only they'd come up with a message that everyone could rally around.

— JON FREEMAN

AT A GLANCE: Wine-drinking loafer wearers not invited.



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Spotlighting artists who reside on the fringes of country music



(From left) Jeffery Salter, Randy Wade, Corey Parsons, Mary Beth Richardson, Stephen Pierce and Danny Vines

PHOTO BY ALBERT KUHN/BLOODSHOT RECORDS

BANDITOS

FOR FANS OF:
ZZ Top, The Rolling Stones,
Waylon Jennings

THE STATE OF ALABAMA HAS been undergoing something of a musical revival in the last few years, as evidenced by some pretty astonishing releases from natives like Jason Isbell, soul outfit St. Paul and the Broken Bones and the mighty Alabama Shakes.

To that list we can also add the six-person wrecking crew that is Banditos, whose self-titled debut arrives via Chicago's venerable Bloodshot Records on May 12. The group of Birmingham natives now inhabits Nashville, but brings the signature swampy boogie, blues and twang of their home state together in the album's 12 tracks.

"We're all over the place," says vocalist/guitarist Corey Parsons, calling in from a putt-putt golf course on his birthday. "I don't think we planned to sound any particular way. It's just all of our influences combining into whatever we're doing now." Corey and his bandmates, Stephen Pierce, Mary Beth Richardson, Jeffery Salter, Danny Vines and Randy Wade, make a glorious racket in songs like "The

Breeze" that ought to sound spot on at every party/barbecue/boat trip/bank heist you have planned.

Corey, Stephen and Mary Beth all take turns with lead vocals, with Mary Beth even adding some bravura kazoo ("the poor man's saxophone," jokes Corey) on "Long Gone, Anyway." Whether it's through sheer will or just the fact that the band members have known one another since they were teenagers frequenting Birmingham's punk scene, that decentralized approach still feels like a cohesive statement from one band.

"Usually the songs that each vocalist sings—the lyrics are written by them," explains Corey of their process. "But we help each other out with some of it. And the songs where we're all singing different verses or different choruses we usually write our own verse or chorus. Basically, what happens is we'll just have the skeleton for a song with a chord progression and some lyrics and it usually just transforms into something we never expected."

Which would be a pretty decent way to describe the Banditos sound: familiar bits run through the active imaginations of talented kids and spat out as something different—

dented, scraped and gnarly, but still captivating in its manic intensity.

"In younger days, we grew up listening to pop country radio, so we couldn't not be country," says Corey, laughing. "We couldn't take the twang out of our music if we tried. We all grew up listening to country radio and then went through classic rock. We all met at a D.I.Y. venue in Birmingham called Cave 9. It's this punk venue. I think we get a lot of our energy and semi-aggressive sound from those days because those shows were just wild and they definitely shaped us into who we are now."

That would be another jarringly original musical act from the Heart of Dixie.

— JON FREEMAN

ESSENTIAL LISTENING:

- ▶ "Long Gone, Anyway"
- ▶ "The Breeze"
- ▶ "Cry Baby Cry"
- ▶ "Blue Mosey #2"

All songs
from *Banditos*.
For more info, visit
banditosband.com.



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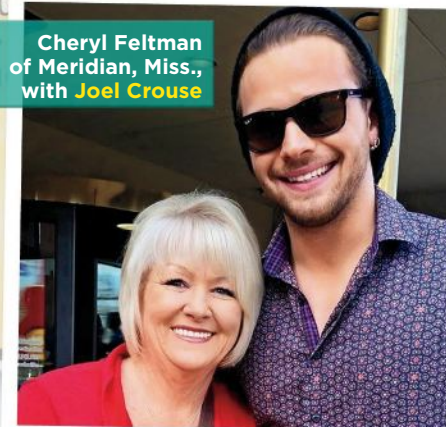
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[STARS UP CLOSE]

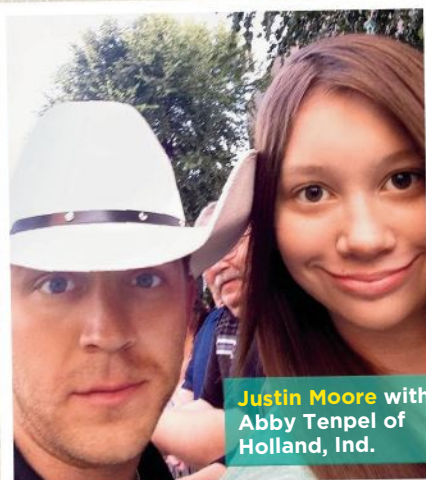
→ Country Weekly readers rub elbows with their favorite stars . . .



Lauren Alaina with
Kayla Soles of
Mount Airy, Md.



Cheryl Feltman
of Meridian, Miss.,
with **Joel Crouse**



Justin Moore with
Abby Tenpel of
Holland, Ind.



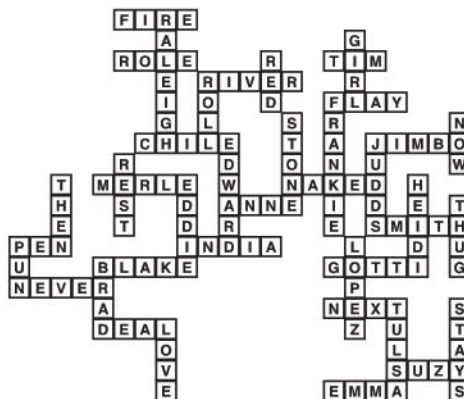
Josh Thompson with **Dierdre Wynn** of
Evarts, Ky.



Elmer Wynn of
Evarts, Ky., with
Kellie Pickler

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

(See Page 78)



WANT YOUR FAN PHOTO PUBLISHED IN COUNTRY WEEKLY?

Send photos to Stars Up Close, *Country Weekly*, 506 2nd Avenue South, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37210, or submit online (no duplicate submissions, please) at CountryWeekly.com/fanphotos. Be sure to include the name, hometown and state of each person pictured. Publication is not guaranteed; photos cannot be returned.



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[FLASHBACK]

THIS WEEK IN COUNTRY



**APRIL
25,
1986**

THE JUDDS, Naomi and daughter Wynonna, effectively disproved the notion that female acts could not sell records when they released their second album, *Why Not Me*, in 1984. The album contained the hit title track along with additional No. 1 singles “Mama He’s Crazy,” which marked the duo’s first career chart-topper, “Love Is Alive” and “Girls Night Out.” *Why Not Me* topped the album charts in February 1985. On April 26, 1986, *Why Not Me* became The Judds’ first platinum album, with sales in excess of 1 million copies.

You could call it a “pick six” for **GARTH BROOKS** at the 26th annual Academy of Country Music Awards show held on April 24, 1991. Garth won a record six times during the evening, taking home every award conceivable. He won the big prize, Entertainer of the Year, along with Top Male Vocalist, Album of the Year for *No Fences*, Single Record of the Year for “Friends in Low Places” and Song and Video of the Year for his poignant tune “The Dance.” During his acceptance speech for the Male Vocalist honor, Garth thanked his parents as well as his musical hero, George Strait.



**APRIL
24,
1991**



**APRIL
20,
2002**

It’s a rare case when **TOBY KEITH** takes on an outside song, in other words, one that he didn’t have a hand in writing. So songwriters Rand Bishop and Tim James had to feel an extra sense of pride when Toby agreed to cut their song “My List” for his 2001 album, *Pull My Chain*. The song revolves around a man who makes a list of the things he must do every day, but puts off what he would really like to do: spend time with his family. But he gradually comes around and gets his priorities in order. “My List” struck a responsive chord with listeners, and it became one of Toby’s longest-running hits, hitting No. 1 on April 20, 2002, and staying at the top for five consecutive weeks.

To read more on **Wade Hayes**, go to CountryWeekly.com/magazine/vault

BIRTHDAYS



APRIL 20, 1969

WADE HAYES

was born in Bethel Acres, Okla., and reached No. 1 with his 1994 debut single, “Old Enough to Know Better.” Wade was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2011 and has made a miraculous recovery from the disease. He recently released a new album, *Go Live Your Life*, whose title track is Wade’s first single since 2012’s “Is It Already Time?”

**APRIL 22, 1936
GLEN CAMPBELL**

**APRIL 22, 1967
HEATH WRIGHT**
of Ricochet

**APRIL 23, 1968
TIM WOMACK**
of Sons of the Desert

**APRIL 24, 1963
KEECH
RAINWATER**
of Lonestar

**APRIL 25, 1965
RORY LEE FEEK**
of Joey+Rory

**APRIL 26, 1971
JAY DeMARCUS**
of Rascal Flatts

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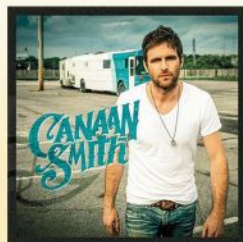


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[CHARTS]

WEEK ENDING APRIL 11, 2015

ALBUMS



Canaan Smith traveled the globe as a contestant on Season 15 of *The Amazing Race*. Now he's in previously uncharted territory, debuting at No. 16 with his first release.

SINGLES

"Homegrown" is quite the buzzword. It's also Zac Brown Band's 11th *Billboard* chart-topper and fastest-peaking single to date, climbing to No. 1 in 11 weeks.



Catch Jason Aldean live on tour or catch him live at No. 1 on CMT's 2014 Artists of the Year special.

CMT VIDEOS

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	1	SPRING BREAK . . . CHECKIN' OUT LUKE BRYAN
2	2	MONTEVALLO SAM HUNT
3	—	NASHVILLE: ON THE RECORD, VOLUME 2 VARIOUS ARTISTS
4	—	2015 ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS ZINEPAK • VARIOUS ARTISTS
5	3	OLD BOOTS, NEW DIRT JASON ALDEAN
6	4	ANYTHING GOES FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
7	15	PAIN KILLER LITTLE BIG TOWN
8	6	THE OUTSIDERS ERIC CHURCH
9	5	IGNITE THE NIGHT CHASE RICE
10	7	GREATEST HITS: DECADE #1 CARRIE UNDERWOOD
11	9	CRASH MY PARTY LUKE BRYAN
12	8	PLATINUM MIRANDA LAMBERT
13	14	COLE SWINDELL COLE SWINDELL
14	16	MAN AGAINST MACHINE GARTH BROOKS
15	13	GREATEST HITS SO FAR . . . ZAC BROWN BAND
16	—	CANAAN SMITH (EP) CANAAN SMITH
17	19	THE BIG REVIVAL KENNY CHESNEY
18	17	JUST AS I AM BRANTLEY GILBERT
19	18	BRINGING BACK THE SUNSHINE BLAKE SHELTON
20	10	SHANIA: STILL THE ONE—LIVE FROM VEGAS SHANIA TWAIN
21	20	I DON'T DANCE LEE BRICE
22	11	STILL THE KING: CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF BOB WILLS AND HIS TEXAS PLAYBOYS • ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL
23	12	SPRING BREAK . . . THE SET LIST: THE COMPLETE SPRING BREAK COLLECTION ZINEPAK • LUKE BRYAN
24	24	RISER DIERKS BENTLEY
25	—	NOTHING BUT THE SILENCE STRIKING MATCHES

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	3	HOMEGROWN ZAC BROWN BAND
2	4	HOMEGROWN HONEY DARIUS RUCKER
3	2	LONELY EYES CHRIS YOUNG
4	5	TAKE YOUR TIME SAM HUNT
5	1	AIN'T WORTH THE WHISKEY COLE SWINDELL
6	6	DRINKING CLASS LEE BRICE
7	9	SAY YOU DO DIERKS BENTLEY
8	10	RAISE 'EM UP KEITH URBAN FEATURING ERIC CHURCH
9	11	A GUY WALKS INTO A BAR TYLER FARR
10	13	DON'T IT BILLY CURRINGTON
11	12	SMOKE A THOUSAND HORSES
12	15	WILD CHILD KENNY CHESNEY WITH GRACE POTTER
13	16	DIAMOND RINGS AND OLD BARSTOOLS TIM MCGRAW WITH CATHERINE DUNN
14	17	BABY BE MY LOVE SONG EASTON CORBIN
15	19	SIPPIN' ON FIRE FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
16	18	LITTLE RED WAGON MIRANDA LAMBERT
17	20	SHE DON'T LOVE YOU ERIC PASLAY
18	21	LITTLE TOY GUNS CARRIE UNDERWOOD
19	22	CRUSHIN' IT BRAD PAISLEY
20	24	LOVE YOU LIKE THAT CANAAN SMITH
21	23	LOVE ME LIKE YOU MEAN IT KELSEA BALLERINI
22	25	HARD TO BE COOL JOE NICHOLS
23	26	KISS YOU IN THE MORNING MICHAEL RAY
24	28	YOUNG & CRAZY FRANKIE BALLARD
25	27	LAY LOW JOSH TURNER
26	32	GIRL CRUSH LITTLE BIG TOWN
27	29	TROUBLE GLORIANA
28	30	ONE HELL OF AN AMEN BRANTLEY GILBERT
29	31	RIOT RASCAL FLATTS
30	34	LIKE A WRECKING BALL ERIC CHURCH

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	2	JUST GETTIN' STARTED JASON ALDEAN
2	3	MEAN TO ME BRETT ELDRIDGE
3	4	LONELY EYES CHRIS YOUNG
4	5	HOMEGROWN HONEY DARIUS RUCKER
5	7	TAKE YOUR TIME SAM HUNT
6	6	DRINKING CLASS LEE BRICE
7	9	AIN'T WORTH THE WHISKEY COLE SWINDELL
8	10	SAY YOU DO DIERKS BENTLEY
9	1	MAKE ME WANNA THOMAS RHETT
10	11	LITTLE RED WAGON MIRANDA LAMBERT

SOURCE: CMT



At No. 7, Cole Swindell hits Nashville's Silver Dollar Saloon to contemplate the value of whiskey.

GAC VIDEOS

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	1	LITTLE TOY GUNS CARRIE UNDERWOOD
2	3	LONELY EYES CHRIS YOUNG
3	4	JUST GETTIN' STARTED JASON ALDEAN
4	8	LITTLE RED WAGON MIRANDA LAMBERT
5	10	LAY LOW JOSH TURNER
6	9	PRAY FOR YOU THE SWON BROTHERS
7	16	AIN'T WORTH THE WHISKEY COLE SWINDELL
8	5	TALLADEGA ERIC CHURCH
9	14	SPRING BREAKDOWN LUKE BRYAN
10	13	FLY MADDIE & TAE

SOURCE: GAC

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MATCH-UP

Between interviews and research, our staff comes across fun facts about our favorite artists all of the time, including many that aren't well known. Try to connect the artists listed below with some of the biographical tidbits we dug up.



BRETT ELDREDGE

1

A

SAW HOT MUD
FROM MOUNT ST.
HELENS FALL FROM
THE SKY



KACEY MUSGRAVES

2

B

PERFORMED WITH
FAR FROM
EINSTYNE



DARIUS RUCKER

3

C

COMPETED ON
NASHVILLE STAR



BRANDY CLARK

4

D

SCAR ON HEAD
FROM C-SECTION
FORCEPS



ZAC BROWN

5

E

SINGING COWBOY
IN A BURGER KING
COMMERCIAL



DWIGHT YOAKAM

6

F

LIVED IN PARIS FOR
QUITE A WHILE

ANSWERS: 1-F; 2-C; 3-E; 4-A; 5-B; 6-D

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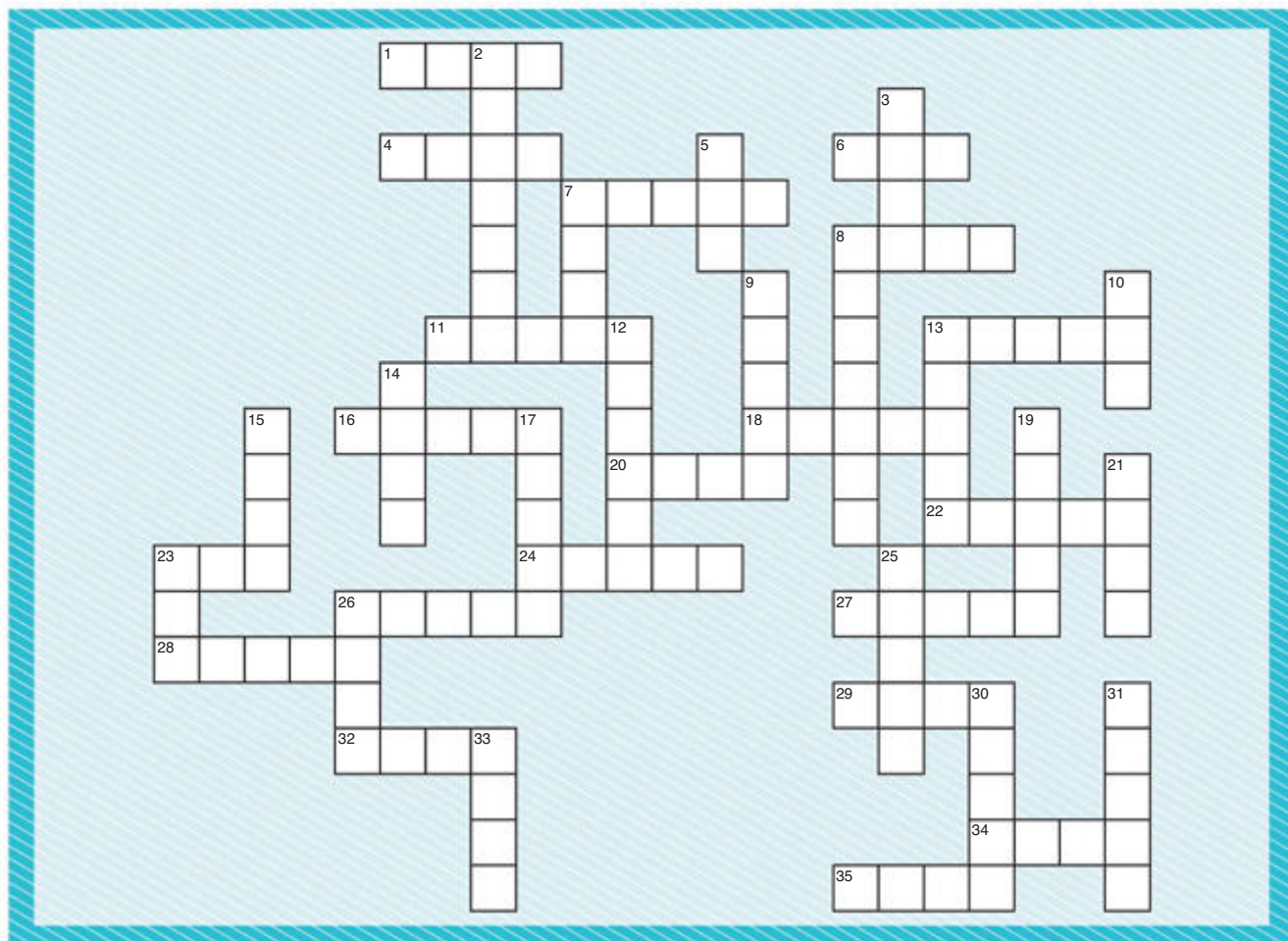


AND VISIT
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[CROSSWORD]

by JOHN REIMAN



ACROSS

- 1 Florida Georgia Line's "Sippin' on ____"
- 4 Homonym for #7 Down
- 6 "Unbroken" singer
- 7 Alabama's "Tennessee ____"
- 8 Strip the skin off
- 11 Santiago is here
- 13 Tennis great Connors' nickname
- 16 "Carolyn" singer
- 18 Norman Mailer's *The ____ and the Dead*
- 20 1970s and '80s singer Murray

- 22 New artist Canaan ____

- 23 Ricky Skaggs' "Uncle ____"
- 24 The Ganges River is here
- 26 "Austin" singer
- 27 "The Dapper Don" John ____
- 28 Rosanne Cash's "____ Be You"
- 29 Brooks & Dunn's "My ____ Broken Heart"
- 32 LeAnn Rimes' "Big ____"
- 34 "Letting Go" singer
- 35 Actress Stone

DOWN

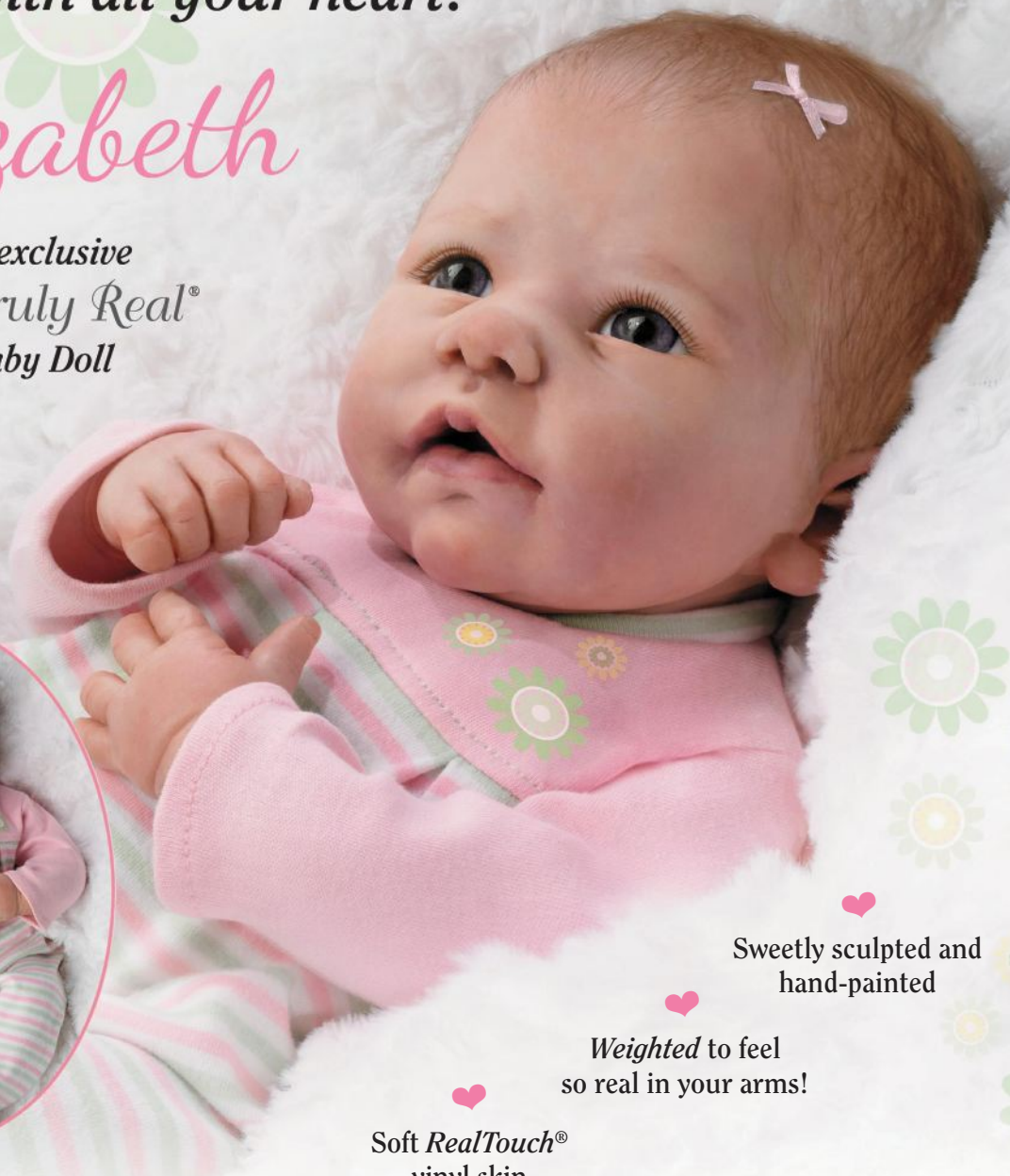
- 2 Capital of North Carolina
- 3 Little Big Town's "____ Crush"
- 5 David Nail's "____ Light"
- 7 Hal Ketchum's "Hearts Are Gonna ____"
- 8 "Young & Crazy" singer
- 9 John Anderson's "Let Go of the ____"
- 10 Garth Brooks' "What She's Doing ____"
- 12 Actor Norton
- 13 "Have Mercy" singers
- 14 Trace Adkins' "The ____ of Mine"

- 15 Opposite of #10 Down
- 17 Best Actor Oscar winner Redmayne
- 19 German model/fashion designer Klum
- 21 Rough, brutal hoodlum or robber
- 23 Humorous play on words
- 25 New act Christian ____ Band
- 26 "Little Moments" singer
- 30 Wade Hayes' "The Day That She Left ____ (In a Chevy)"
- 31 Toby Keith's "____ in Mexico"
- 33 Dan Seals' "____ on Arrival"

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FILL IN THE BLANKS

with IRA DEAN

I like it when . . .

I pay less in taxes at the end of the year than I thought I was going to.

My favorite TV show is . . .

Boxing.

My favorite color is ...

Black or purple or a dark, dark purple. So I guess it would be blurple?

If I could be anyone for a day, I would be . . .

I'm having a hard enough time being me before I can be anybody else.

If I could change one thing about myself . . .

I'd be able to enjoy downtime.

I would love to do a duet with . . .

Paul McCartney, but Kanye's done that, and I don't want to do anything Kanye has done.

A guy can never have too many . . .

Guitars, cars, motorcycles, guns and friends.

The first thing I do in the morning is . . .

Pet my dogs, Presleigh and Amos, pee, let the dogs out and get a cup of coffee.

I wish I were . . .

Hanging out with Paul McCartney.

I can't live without . . .

Music and Jesus.

The one word that describes my day today is . . .

Crazy.

Music is . . .

Everything.

I think that ____ sucks.

Kanye West.





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